Veils of Darkness

Rays of Light

VEILS OF DARKNESS

RAYS OF LIGHT

وَذَرُوا ظَاهِرَ الْإِثْمِ وَبَاطِنَهُ

Abandon all sin——
external and internal.

(Al-Anʿām 6:120)

Veils of Darkness

Rays of Light

By Shaykh Tameem Ahmadi

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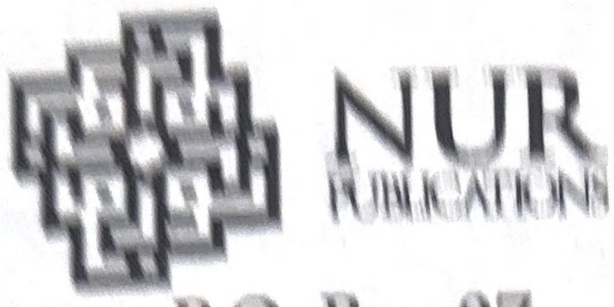

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I

dedicate

this compilation,

to my spiritual father

and beloved *murshid*, ʿĀrif Billah,

Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Shāh Ḥakīm Muḥammad Akhtar

who was a living embodiment of

love for Allah, piety, and the

teachings contained

in this

book.

May Allah be eternally pleased with him.

Transliteration and Honorific Guide

The transliteration used in our books is to facilitate the pronunciation of Arabic words using Roman script for the ease and convenience of our readers. However, this is not meant to be a substitute for learning to properly read and pronounce Arabic script. Every Muslim should take it upon themselves to learn the rules of *tajwīd* (proper Qur'ānic recitation) from a qualified teacher.

أ,ء	a, ʾ	ط	ṭ	ـُ	u
ب	b	ظ	ẓ	ا, آ	ā
ت	t	ع	ʿ	ـِي	ī
ث	th	غ	gh	ـُو	ū
ج	j	ف	f	ﷻ	"Glorified and Exalted
ح	ḥ	ق	q	ﷺ	"Peace and blessing of Allah be upon him"
خ	kh	ك	k		
د	d	ل	l	عليه السلام, عليها السلام	"Peace be upon him/them"
ذ	dh	م	m		
ر	r	ن	n	رضي الله عنه, رضي الله عنها	"Allah be pleased with him/her"
ز	z	و	w		
س	s	ه	h	رضي الله عنهم, رضي الله عنهما	"Allah be pleased with them"
ش	sh	ي	y		
ص	ṣ	ـَ	a	رحمه الله	"Allah have mercy upon him"
ض	ḍ	ـِ	i		

According to the convention used in our books:

-The Majestic Name, "Allah," does not take a diacritic.

-The *tā marbūtah* (ة) that occurs at the end of some Arabic words is generally transliterated into English with an "h" at the end of the word to resemble its pausal pronunciation.

-Arabic words transliterated into English are italicized except for proper nouns.

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PROLOGUE

THIS COMPILATION IS THE ESSENCE OF THE TEACHINGS OF my beloved *shaykh*, ʿĀrifbillāh Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Shāh Ḥakīm Muḥammad Akhtar Ṣāḥib ﵀, whose company I had the good fortune to be in from 2002 until his passing in 2012. Ḥaḍrat was an illustrious representative of the Thānwī legacy[1] and disseminated the profound teachings of Mawlānā Thānwī ﵀ in a simple and practical manner.

1—Referring to the great reviver and sage of Islam, Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī (d. 1943).

The main concern of our beloved Ḥaḍrat was to help liberate the entire Ummah from the clutches of *nafs* and *shayṭān*; from a life of sin and disobedience to their Creator.

He would often say, "The path to Allah is very easy my friends: just leave sins!"

He would also say, "All I ask is for us to guard our eyes from lustful glances and guard our hearts from that which takes us away from Allah (*ghayrullah*). If you do this, I guarantee that *inshā'Allah*, you will become a friend (*walī*) of Allah."

In his heartfelt supplications that were often watered by tears of the love of Allah, he would say, "O Allah, take us to the loftiest stations of the foremost saints (*awliyā-e-siddiqīn*) and do not allow us to disobey You for even the blink of an eye..."

One time he said, "What can I do? Allah has inspired my heart with this one thing: just leave sins!"

His finger was on the pulse of the Ummah and Allah had inspired his heart with one concern; he would urge and appeal his disciples (*murīds*) and the Ummah at large—day and night— to guard themselves from sin, with a specific focus on guarding the eyes from lustful glances. It was as if there was nothing else more important to him than this.

Fast forward to the late 90's and early 2000's when the porn industry—bazaars of lust and shamelessness—was booming,

during which it became the largest and most profitable industry in the world, making more money than the National Football League, National Basketball Association and Major League Baseball combined; and more than several major television networks combined.

From the religious elite all the way down to children of tender age, the world is now adversely affected by the onslaught of this destructive, faith-darkening epidemic.

When I think about the spiritual insight of our beloved *shaykh*, I am certain that Allah had selected him for the revival of this critical teaching. He had been shown the tidal wave of this destructive evil. Seekers visiting the *khānqāh* (center for spiritual reformation) and attending his blessed gatherings were imbued with this one concern and focus. Hundreds of visitors would find guidance, direction, and instruction on how to disconnect themselves from sin and spiritually destructive habits and reconnect themselves to Allah.

Once when we were in Ḥaḍrat's service and company, a young man requested to speak with him. The man began to weep bitterly and said, "Ḥaḍrat, my family wants to get me married..."

Ḥaḍrat replied, "But this is a good thing, is it not? Do you not want to get married?"

The young man cried even more until he could not speak. Then he said, "Ḥaḍrat, I cannot be married to a woman because I have no feelings for women. I am only sexually attracted to men. I am aroused by men. I fear that if my parents get me married to this girl, both my life and her life will be ruined."

Witnessing this confession and the plight of this young man, I became extremely uncomfortable, and I could not even begin to guess what Ḥaḍrat's response would be. Would he scold him? Would he expel him? What would he say? To my utter surprise, Ḥaḍrat's response was one of unconditional love and mercy.

Ḥaḍrat's eyes were closed as the young man anxiously awaited his response, tears flowing down his cheeks. Ḥaḍrat opened his eyes, which were also filled with tears of heartfelt concern. He looked at the young man with a firm but encouraging gaze and replied, "Don't worry my son. Don't worry. Just stay with us."

He then put his hand on the young man's shoulder, patted him on the back in encouragement, and said:

> The urge or desire to sin is not a sin! The inclination towards men that you experience is not something to be despondent about. If you do not act upon those lustful temptations, then there is no sin upon you. Trample these desires. Crush the demands of your lower desires

(*nafs*). Slaughter this *nafs* and shed its blood of desires. Through this you will reach Allah...

As these words emanated from the blessed lips of Ḥaḍrat, the young man's tears of hopelessness were transformed into tears of joy, and the frown of despair changed into a smile of hope. From then on, he was seen every day in the *khānqāh* and Ḥaḍrat would show immense kindness and attention to him.

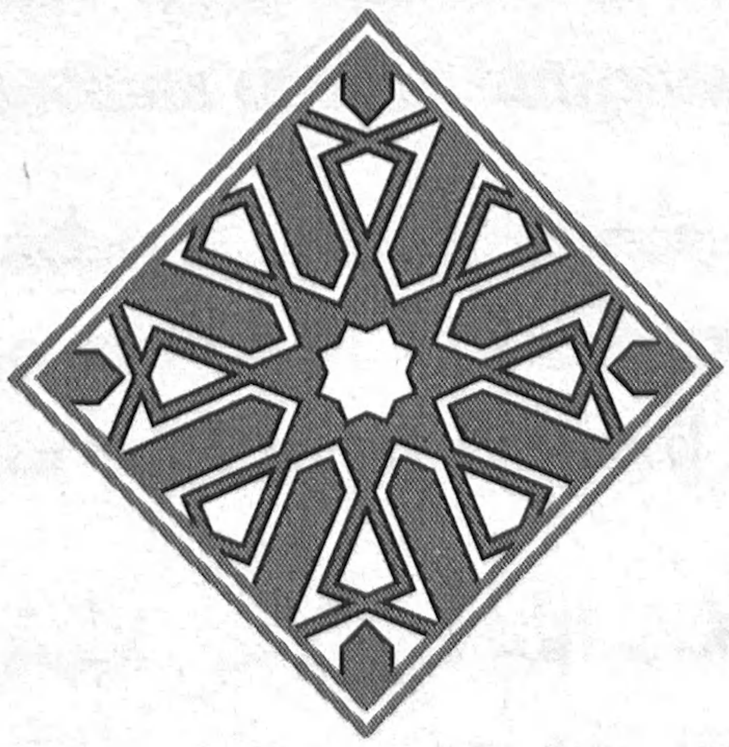
As I relate these memories, they seem like stories from the sages and saints of the past. My heart pains to say that had I not seen Ḥaḍrat with my own eyes, and lived with such a blessed soul, I would have thought that these people were just heroes from an epic fable. But the truth of the matter is that this was but one anecdote from hundreds of such incidents from the life of our beloved *shaykh*.

This book is an attempt to capture the essence of his main teachings. Though there was much more that he taught and emphasized, (his life works exceed fifteen volumes between his books and transcribed lectures) his teachings can generally be categorized as follows:

- Purification of the heart (*tazkiyah*) and treading the path to Allah (*sulūk*).
- Rights and responsibilities towards the creation of Allah.

- Love of Allah ﷻ.
- Adherence to the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.
- Abandoning sins and disobedience.

I ask Allah to accept this compilation out of His sheer mercy and make it a source of hope and guidance for all those who read it, and a perpetual reward for our beloved *shaykh*, who lived his life as an embodiment of Allah's love and obedience. *Āmīn*.



بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Introduction

On our path to Allah there are undoubtedly bandits and robbers attempting to rob us of our goods, hoping to leave us empty-handed and bankrupt. Our goods are our deeds and righteous actions, and the bandits and robbers are none other than our lower desires (*nafs*), *shayṭān*, and the sinful temptations of this temporary abode.

It is with righteous actions, goodly deeds, and pure intentions that we rise above our mundane worldly existence to the nobler and higher purpose for which our Beloved Allah has created us.

إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللهِ قَرِيبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

"Indeed, the mercy of Allah is near those who strive to do good works in excellence."[2]

2—Al-Fāṭir 35:10

Through these acts of righteousness, worship, and devotion, Allah showers His mercies and blessings upon our hearts, which are the receptacles of His Divine grace.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Verily Allah does not look upon your wealth or upon your appearances, but rather He looks upon your hearts and actions..."[3]

What then can be more honorable than the heart—the place upon which Allah looks? And what can be said about that heart which is purified and prepared to receive the Divine grace?

Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir al-Jilānī رحمه الله said:

> Allah has made the tilth of the heart the depository of His recognition and knowledge (*maʿrifah* and *ʿilm*). He casts three hundred and sixty glances of mercy upon that heart every day and night.[4] If He had not made the heart

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3—Muslim

4— Regarding these three hundred and sixty glances of mercy, we were unable to find exact or literal wording from the *ḥadīth* that supports this. However, there is a subtle indication from a *ḥadīth* narrated in Saḥīḥ Muslim that for every day that a person wakes up in the morning, there is a charity due for each joint in the body. The commentators explain that there are three hundred and sixty joints in the body. Those three hundred and sixty joints are actually three hundred and sixty bounties bestowed upon us by our merciful Lord. Out of gratitude to Allah for these three hundred and sixty bounties, we are encouraged by the Prophet ﷺ to give one charity for each joint. So, the three hundred and sixty glances of mercy mentioned above could possibly be the manifestation of the same three hundred and sixty bounties bestowed upon us every day. And Allah ﷻ knows best.

> the depository for His knowledge and recognition, that heart would have become torn and shattered. When a person takes care of that heart and cultivates the love of Allah and His worship and devotion in its tilth, then rivers of wisdom flow from it by which the people benefit. And the possessors of these purified and fertile hearts become like mountains (of guidance for mankind).[5]

In this way, Allah ﷻ is perpetually pouring His Divine light onto our hearts.

The lower desires (*nafs*) and *shayṭān* however, constantly pull us down—rendering us lower than the animals by defiling our hearts with worldly temptations of sin and disobedience. In doing so, they succeed in destroying the sacred and sanctified potential Allah has endowed all of us with.

Shayṭān continuously bombards the heart with doubts and sinful insinuations; and the base desires (*nafs*) incessantly command us to become enslaved by our lower passions; enveloping our hearts with veils that prevent the rays of Divine light from entering. Yet at all times, Allah's special manifestations of mercy and grace descend upon our hearts to elevate us.

Therefore, we are in a constant struggle between veils of darkness, in the form of sin and temptation, and rays of light, in the

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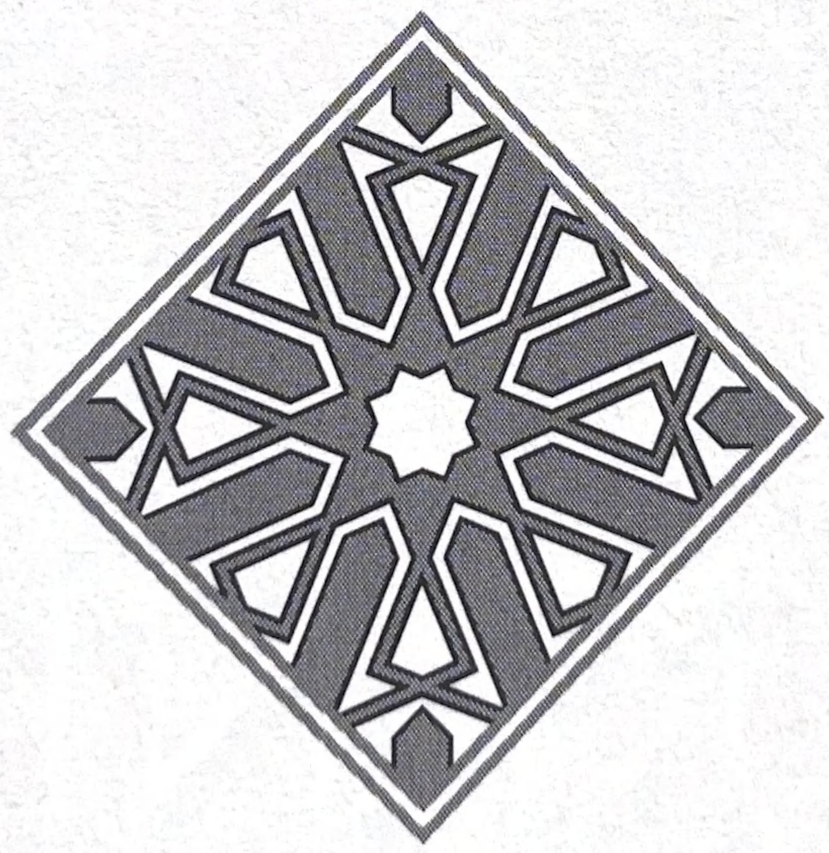
5—*Al-Fatḥ al-Rabbānī*; Discourse #62

form of Allah's mercy and Divine grace. We are in a constant battle to remove these veils from the heart to receive the rays of Divine light from Allah.

But how can this be done? By learning from those who have already done so—the people of Allah.

The people of Allah are the elite of His creation. Their hearts are filled with His love and their entire lives are dedicated to His sincere service. Their actions and deeds radiate complete submission and servitude, and their words are a source of guiding light for the entire world. They are a people who have struggled a lifetime to oppose the sinful temptations of this world and to remove the veils of darkness from their hearts so that the rays of Divine light can illuminate their innermost beings.

This book is a collection of reflections and words of wisdom from such illustrious people. Their teachings, experiences, and guidance can help us overcome the obstacles of temptation and sin. By following them, we will, *inshā'Allah*, be able to remove the veils of darkness from our hearts, allowing us to receive the Divine rays of light that are perpetually shining upon them. May Allah accept this effort and make it a means of benefit for all.



VEILS OF DARKNESS

SECTION ONE:
THE REALITY OF SIN

THE LOVE OF ALLAH & THE REALITY OF SIN

WE WERE SITTING IN THE INNER ROOM OF THE KHĀNQĀH (spiritual center for self-reformation), in the company of our *shaykh*, for his after-*ʿasr* gathering (*majlis*). The electricity had just gone out, as was usual in Karachi due to the constant load-shedding. The summer heat was intense, the air suffocating. This particular room was completely still, not a single breeze could be felt. There was a palpable feeling of unease; people were squirming in their places out of discomfort.

Noticing this, Ḥaḍrat suggested that his bed be taken out into the courtyard of the *khānqāh*. As soon as the bed was moved into the courtyard and the gathering was resituated, the cool breeze from the fresh air outside brought relief to all the attendees. Ḥaḍrat then smiled and said:

> See? We were behind this wall inside the *khānqāh* and it was hot, uncomfortable, and the air was suffocating. As soon as we moved beyond this barrier, beyond this wall, the cool breeze was felt by everyone and we were all relieved of the heat. It is the same with the lower desires (*nafs*) and sins. These sins that plague us become like a barrier or wall which prevents the cool breeze of Allah's mercy and love from reaching us. We need to remove the barrier of the lower desires (*nafs*); only then will we experience the cool breeze of Allah's love.

This incident from the life of our beloved shaykh, Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Shāh Ḥakīm Muḥammad Akhtar Ṣāḥib, teaches us a very important principle on the path to Allah (*sulūk*). In order to attain the love of Allah and establish a special connection (*niṣbah*) with Him, it is not sufficient to only perform good deeds; rather, it is just as crucial to stop obeying the lower desires (*nafs*) and to altogether abandon sin. Without this, we will be in a constant state of spiritual suffocation. Moreover, even though we may be sincere in our actions, the rays of light and the breeze

of Allah's love will not reach us because they are obstructed by veils of darkness and sin.

In another incident, our beloved *shaykh* was traveling from Jeddah to Makkah with his *shaykh*, Mawlānā Abrār al-Ḥaqq ﵀. Though the A/C was running, the car was not cooling down. After checking, someone noticed that one of the windows was slightly open. Upon closing it the entire car became cool and comfortable. Our beloved *shaykh* remarked that this was just like the relationship between good deeds and sins. The coolness of the A/C could not take effect because the window was open; similarly, the good deeds that we perform will not have their desired effect if we allow the internal blessings associated with them to escape due to our sins.

After narrating this incident, he would often remark:

> When one looks at anything unlawful (*ḥarām*), light (*nūr*) escapes from the eyes; when one hears anything unlawful, light escapes from the ears; when one utters anything unlawful, light escapes from the mouth. In this manner, whatever light (*nūr*) we had accumulated through our righteous deeds, escapes from our hearts.

These analogies provide an answer to the commonly asked question as to why, despite much worship, one might not experience the sweetness of faith (*īmān*). It is because, despite all the good

deeds, there are still evil habits present in one's life that have not yet been left.

Abū Yazīd al-Busṭāmī ﷺ narrated that he saw in a vision that he was in the presence of Allah's court. He asked, "O My Lord, how shall I attain You?" He was answered, "Abandon your lower desires (*nafs*) and come."[6]

A NECESSARY CONDITION OF SULŪK

Ḥāfiẓ Shirāzī ﷺ advises those treading the path of Allah's love (*sālik*) to take heed of an important condition of the path:

در ره منـزل لیـلی کـه خطرهاسـت در آن
شـرط اول قـدم آن اسـت کـه مجنـون بـاشی

On the path to the Beloved there are many dangers that lurk,
The first condition is that you should be madly in love!

Ḥakīm al-Ummah ﷺ comments on these words:

> It is a necessary condition (of the path to Allah) that the *sālik* makes a firm resolution that regardless of any criticism they face, regardless of any loss in worldly benefit,

6—*Tadhkirah al-Awliyā'*

> regardless of the magnitude of loss in life or property or wealth, they will remain steadfast upon the obedience of Allah and His Messenger. If you lack the courage and determination to make this resolution, then know that you are neither seeking Allah nor are you a *sālik*.[7]

How can one claim love for another when they are ready to relinquish their claim by turning their back on their so-called beloved at the first sight of difficulty?

In this world, we frequently observe people who are in love with a 'worldly' beloved. We see the lover going to lengths to please their beloved, abstaining from the slightest thing that may displease them. How then can it be that a person claims the love of Allah and still submits to the dictates of *nafs* and *shayṭān*?

THE REALITY OF SIN

Our beloved *shaykh*, ʿĀrif Billāh Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Shāh Ḥakīm Muḥammad Akhtar ﷺ said:

> Every sin is poison. It is poison for the soul. If one does not consider sin to be worse than urine and feces, then they have not understood the reality of sin.

7—*Qaṣd al-Sabīl*

Comparing sin to urine and feces may seem a bit exaggerated, but this is something that is actually established both through logic and textual evidence.

As for the textual evidence, Allah says:

فَاجْتَنِبُوا الرِّجْسَ مِنَ الْأَوْثَانِ وَاجْتَنِبُوا قَوْلَ الزُّور

"*So, shun the filth of idols, and avoid false speech.*"[8]

Imām al-Ṭabarī ﷺ explains that "*rijs*" in this verse means:

> ... '*Rijs*' is that which is filthy, putrid, or any action by which Allah is disobeyed...

At another juncture he comments:

> '*Rijs*' is impurity and filth which has no goodness in it, and it is the quality of *shayṭān*...

In reality, human excrement is a means by which toxins are removed from our bodies; and so urine and feces have this physical benefit associated with them. However, as Imām al-Ṭabarī notes, *rijs* is "filth which has no goodness in it," which means it is literally worse than urine and feces.

Logically speaking, when meeting an honorable person or attending a dignified gathering, we clean and groom ourselves to

8—Al-Ḥajj 22:30

be as presentable as possible. We aim to please the people we intend to meet. This is because they see our external features and appearances and it gives them an impression of who we are on the inside. Therefore, it is only logical that when meeting with Allah—Who sees our hearts and intentions and knows us inside out—we make sure that the filth of *rijs* is not present in our internal states in order to be more presentable to Him.

AVOIDANCE OF SIN: A REQUIREMENT OF FAITH

These days, some people have been deceived into thinking that the one who emphasizes the avoidance of sin and discusses the importance of recognizing the lawful (*ḥalāl*) and the unlawful (*ḥarām*) is rigid, strict, and lacking wisdom. If by this they mean that these individuals are unnecessarily strict due to the harshness of their tone or method of delivery, or that they are not articulating this important topic with proper wisdom to their respective audience, then we agree. These issues should be articulated wisely and in a way that is conducive to spiritual growth, without having a condescending or harsh attitude towards the audience.

However, if they mean that sins should not be mentioned at all or that the rules of *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām* should not be taught, then the ignorance of these people knows no bounds. Recognition of *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām*, coupled with the avoidance of sins, are essential requirements of faith. Without this, a person cannot be a Muslim.

Allah ﷻ says:

وَذَرُوا ظَاهِرَ الْإِثْمِ وَبَاطِنَهُ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْسِبُونَ
الْإِثْمَ سَيُجْزَوْنَ بِمَا كَانُوا يَقْتَرِفُونَ

"Abandon all sin, external and internal; verily those who earn sin will be recompensed for what they have earned."[9]

How can the love of the beloved be attained without doing what the beloved loves, and abandoning what the beloved detests? If one claims love but continues to do all those things that the beloved hates, this can by no means be considered true and sincere love.

Imām al-Shafiʿī ﷺ is reported to have said:

تَعْصِي الإِلٰهِ وَأَنْتَ تُظْهِرُ حُبَّهُ ... هذا محالٌ في القياس بديعُ
لَوْ كانَ حُبُّكَ صَادِقاً لأَطَعْتَهُ ... إنَّ الْمُحِبَّ لِمَنْ يُحِبُّ مُطِيعُ
في كلِّ يومٍ يبتديكَ بنعمةٍ ... منهُ وأنتَ لشكرِ ذاكَ مضيعُ

9—Al-Anʿām 6:120

You disobey Allah while claiming His love?
This is impossible and far-fetched

If your love were truly sincere
then you would have obeyed Him,
Verily the lover is obedient to the Beloved

Every day He bestows upon you a new gift,
And you are in response to that gift, careless.

ALLAH'S LOVE & ALLAH'S REVERENCE

Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Ḥakīm Muḥammad Akhtar ﷺ said:

اللہ کی محبت کا حق

[Performing good deeds and doing righteous acts]
is the right of Allah's love...

In other words, we love Allah; hence, we do good deeds because we know of His unending generosity in rewarding us for them.

But, there is another right He has over us, and that is:

اللہ کی عظمت کا حق

[Abstaining from sinful acts and shameful deeds] which is the right of Allah's reverence...

In other words, the right of His majesty and reverence demands that we should also abstain from sinful acts and shameless deeds that displease Him. Love for Allah is not complete unless a person has both love *and* reverence for His Almighty Creator.

Ḥaḍrat used to say:

Every sin distances one from the True Beloved. This is why I say, 'The greatest harm of sin and disobedience of Allah is that it veils you from the Beloved.' Do you not see how Allah will punish His disobedient slaves on that Day?

كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِم مَّا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ۝
كَلَّا إِنَّهُمْ عَن رَّبِّهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّمَحْجُوبُونَ

"Nay! But on their hearts is a covering (of sins and evil deeds) which they used to earn. Nay! Surely, they (the evil-doers) will be veiled from seeing their Lord that Day."[10]

Ask the lover: how does it feel to be veiled and distanced from the beloved? It is the worst punishment that can be inflicted.

10—Al-Muṭaffifin 83:14-15

FANĀ'IYYAT-E-ḤUSN: THE FLEETING NATURE OF BEAUTY

One manifestation of the veils of darkness is the veil of lust, which arises in response to external beauty. Our beloved *shaykh* used to discuss this subject in detail in his lectures and writings.

Ḥaḍrat ﷺ used to teach that one should reflect deeply upon the fleeting nature of beauty. This reflection in and of itself is an amazing cure to the disease of lust and sinful glances. For Allah ﷻ says:

وَاضْرِبْ لَهُم مَّثَلَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَاءٍ أَنزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ فَأَصْبَحَ هَشِيمًا تَذْرُوهُ الرِّيَاحُ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّقْتَدِرًا

"And give them a parable of this worldly life. [It is] like the plants of the earth, thriving when sustained by the rain that We send down from the sky. Then they [soon] turn into dry stubble scattered by the wind. And Allah is fully capable of [doing] all things."[11]

11—Al-Kahf 18:45

Abū Hurayrah ﷺ narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has said, "Abundantly reflect upon the destroyer of pleasures (i.e., death)." [12]

The one who is deceived by the external beauty of "now", does not realize the final destination of all worldly beauty: *fanā'*— decline and eventual termination.

Ḥaḍrat would often say:

> Every young, eighteen-year-old beauty will eventually become an eighty-year-old grandmother or grandfather. What will you do then, when their beauty has vanished? These beauties that you are ready to die for now, will you have any desire to even glance at them once their beauty has vanished? What is the end of all these beauties? All will eventually be reduced to rotting corpses in the grave. If you ponder upon their destination, would you ruin your life and disobey Allah for the sake of those corpses? All these worldly beauties are simply carriers of filth, urine, and feces. Think about the impurities and the filthy act that is the final objective of forbidden lust... it is nothing else but the attainment of private-parts. Is this the purpose for which Allah has created us?

12—Tirmidhī and Nasā'ī

Obviously, intimate relations with one's *ḥalāl* spouse is exempt from this perspective. But as for the constant pursuit of satisfying the fire of lust, there will be no end to it unless one suffices on the fulfillment of needs, not the fulfillment of desires. Desire is an insatiable fire that will never be extinguished except by the love and remembrance of Allah and by sufficing upon fulfilling one's necessity.

THE ONLY LASTING BEAUTY

The only entity in this universe whose beauty can never vanish or diminish is the eternal beauty of our Beloved Creator. He is the Creator of all beauty. And, He Who has created all beauty, how beautiful must He be?! Mawlānā Rūmī ﷺ says:

ای دوست شکر بهتر یا آنک شکر سازد
خوبی قمر بهتر یا آنک قمر سازد

O friend! Is this sugar sweeter or the Creator of this sugar?
My dear! Is this moon more beautiful or the Creator of this moon?

Who else is more worthy to live for, to die for, to give for, and to sacrifice for other than Allah? Anyone with an iota of common sense and intellect will never give their life for mere perishing entities, when they have the everlasting beauty of Allah before them.

A SHAYṬĀNIC DECEPTION: THE BEAUTIFICATION OF SIN

Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Ḥakīm Muḥammad Akhtar ﷺ writes:

When the heart becomes infatuated with either someone's external beauty or a sin, this state of infatuation is called *tamwīh*. This is a trap of *shayṭān*, who embellishes the sin or the physical beauty, concealing one from its true reality. Allah ﷻ admonishes us, saying:

وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ

"*And shayṭān beautifies for them their actions.*"[13]

Once *shayṭān* entraps someone, then even the most unattractive or despicable act appears desirable. When a

13—Al-Naml 27: 24

person then commits that act of sin and their desire has been fulfilled, the true face of the act becomes manifest—and it returns to being wretched and loathsome in the eye of the doer.

When one then returns to their senses and sees the action for what it really is, this is called *tanbīh*. Mawlānā Rūmī ﷺ writes about these two states:

گر نماید غیرهم تمویه اوست
ور رود غیر از نظر تنبیه اوست

When the love of ghayrullah[14] *dominates*
the heart, this is tamwīh.
When the love of ghayrullah goes away
from the heart, this is tambīh.

Mawlānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī ﷺ explains these lines of the Mathnawī in this way: once one becomes attracted or inclined to some worldly beauty and their heart begins to develop an infatuation with it, then even if this person prays or supplicates, their prayers and supplications [to escape the sin] will be ineffective. This is because deep down inside they do not want to leave that sin.

14—*Ghayrullah* means, all those things that divert one from Allah. It literally means, "other than Allah."

They do not want to empty their heart of that infatuation and so because of this manifestation of insincerity their prayers and supplications are ineffective.

This state of something being more attractive or desirable than it actually is, is called *tamwīh*. Attaining salvation from it is *tambīh*.

A TRIBULATION FROM ALLAH

Anyone who rebels and transgresses beyond the limits, Allah ﷻ gives them the intoxicating drink of His wrath. The one who becomes intoxicated by the drink of Allah's wrath, is no longer able to perceive things as they really are.

Mawlānā Rūmī ﷺ says:

از شراب قهر چون مستی دهد
نیستها را صورت هستی دهد

When He gives intoxication by the drink of His wrath,
He make the "nothings" appear as "somethings."

When one is struck by this Divine affliction, then these nothings—non-entities or ephemeral walking corpses—appear to be

alive, attractive, and desirable. The one affected by this intoxication becomes fixated on the specifics of a man or a woman's body, fantasizing to themselves, "Look how attractive they are... look at their body... look at their hips... look at their lips... look at their eyes, etc."[15]

One who obsesses over worldly beauty is afflicted by the intoxication of lust. Mawlānā Ḥakīm Muḥammad Akhtar ﷺ said, "My poem on this matter goes like this:

حسن فانی سے ترا آہ یہ شاداں ہونا
یہی دلیل ہے ظالم ترا ناداں ہونا

Your obsession and excitement for these temporal beauties,
Is a clear sign of your foolishness!"

We must understand that lust is a very dangerous sickness of the heart that will eventually consume one if they become afflicted by it.

Many of the righteous would seek refuge in Allah from being deceived and beguiled by a misperception of reality, supplicating:

15—It is essential to note that appreciating the beauty of one's spouse, the beauty of nature, and the beauty of all of Allah's creation *is* appreciation of Allah's bounties. It is only lustful attraction towards beauty *other than* the beauty of one's lawful spouse that should be avoided.

اَللّٰهُمَّ أَرِنَا الْحَقَّ حَقًّا، وَارْزُقْنَا اتِّبَاعَهُ،
وَأَرِنَا البَاطِلَ بَاطِلاً، وَارْزُقْنَا اجْتِنَابَهُ

"O Allah show us the truth as it is, and enable us to follow it; and show us falsehood as it is, and enable us to avoid it."

From this section we understand the importance of avoiding internal and external sins at all costs. This process begins by first recognizing those sins, then identifying them within oneself, and then finally removing those sins from our lives.

REMOVING THE VEILS

SECTION TWO:

Reforming the Heart & Remedying the Disease of Sin

REMOVING THE DOMINATION OF SINS

When we reflect upon our internal states and see our feeble condition, we may become overwhelmed by the following thought: How is it possible for someone like me to completely rid myself of these sins? Maybe the path to Allah is not for a filthy, sinful person such as myself? Maybe this path is for those angelic souls who do not even entertain the thought of committing an act of sin.

This incorrect notion can lead the one seeking Allah to despair and drag them into dangerously negative thinking. They then completely give in to the demands of *nafs* and *shayṭān* and abandon the path to Allah altogether.

Mawlānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī ﷺ rectifies this incorrect notion and explains what "removing sins" from the self really means:

> The 'removal' of these evil traits actually means: to weaken their control over a person and make these traits ineffective in their ability to dominate or take control. The meaning of 'ridding' oneself of sin is to work upon the lower desires (*nafs*) until there no longer remains any hardship in resisting temptation. Temptation will remain, but it will become much easier to resist it.

The innate temptations within the heart of a person never really go away. They will always be present as subtle impulses, but through effort they will have been weakened to such an extent that they will be unable to overtake or control one's life. For example, an angry person's anger does not really go away, but it can be managed so that when they become angry they do not allow that anger to overwhelm them to the extent of hurting others. Likewise, the sexual desire of a person does not really go away. However, the intense and overwhelming control it has over them diminishes.

The reality of striving (*mujāhadah*) on the path to Allah (*sulūk*) is simply this: weakening the control that these sins or evil traits have over the self."[16]

Ḥaḍrat Thānwī ﷺ continues:

> [The reality of the matter is this...] neither the greed of the greedy goes away, nor the arrogance of the arrogant, nor the miserliness of the miserly. Nevertheless, the control that greed has over the heart should go; there should be no effect of arrogance either on one's character or one's treatment of others. The result of self-reformation is that one does not act on the demands of these evil traits, nor do they bring them into action. The reason for this is that actions are within one's control; whereas feelings, emotions, and internal states are outside of one's control. Although it is not within one's power to remove one's internal states and emotions, it is within one's power to not act upon the demands of that evil desire—and is a great accomplishment. And this is possible through discipline and effort... [17]

One of the close disciples (*murīds*) of our beloved *shaykh*, Ḥaḍrat Shāh Ḥakīm Akhtar Ṣāḥib ﷺ once complained of his state, saying, "O my beloved *shaykh*, my heart is an ocean of lust and desire!

16—*Anfās-e-ʿĪsā*
17—*Anfās-e-ʿĪsā*

How could it ever be possible for me to attain the love of Allah and become a close friend of Allah (*walī*)?"

Ḥaḍrat responded to him with great love and affection, saying:

> O my beloved, that entire ocean of lust and desire can be transformed into an ocean of the love and recognition (*maʿrifah*) of Allah with a straight-forward remedy: simply do not act upon the demands of that lust and desire and restrain it for the sake of Allah. As a result you will reach a higher rank (*maqām*) with Him than those who have no lust and desire.

We must understand that every desire to sin is a potential step on the ladder to progressing in the path to Allah. If one has a lot of desire for sin and constantly struggles with temptation, then that just means that they have more steps on their ladder to go higher. And the way that is done is everytime temptation attacks you—step on it. Oppose it. Fight it. Conquer it. Once you have stepped on it, you have gone one level higher in the stages of *sulūk*. Allah mentions in the Qur'ān:

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ
عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ۞ فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ

And as for those who were in awe of standing before their Lord and restrained themselves from 'evil' desires; Paradise will certainly be 'their' abode.[18]

HOW TO REFORM ONESELF AND LEAVE SINS

Sins are bad habits—they do not appear out of nowhere. Bad habits fester over time until they become second nature. Ultimately, the only way to get rid of bad habits is to replace them with good ones; but this is easier said than done. Moreover, regardless of how much convenience or ease or comfort we may seek in doing so, it is simply not possible to inculcate good habits and abandon bad ones without discipline and self-restraint. Struggle and hardship are inescapable. As the saying goes, "No pain, no gain."

It is essential for us to understand this concept because people are always looking for convenience in everything. They are trying to rethink an Islam which does not require them to experience any difficulty or make any sacrifice; an Islam catered

18—Al-Nāziʿāt 79:40-41

to the lower desires (*nafs*); an Islam tailored to suit one's own conveniences. However, the reality of the matter is that if one analyzes the religion closely, they will observe that each and every aspect of it requires discipline, self-restraint, and hard work. In fact, the entire faith (*dīn*) is based on this principle.

"Dīn" literally means, "that which is accounted for and reckoned." Being held accountable for something, even in this world, is not easy. When an employee is held accountable to do their job, this means they have to put themselves through various degrees of difficulty to fulfill what they are going to be accountable for. In this life, we have been tasked by Allah with responding properly to both the various commandments we are given and the various circumstances we are put in. We are then rewarded or punished depending on our fulfillment of the commandments and our response to the circumstances, respectively. All of the above necessitates struggle; thus a certain amount of hardship cannot be avoided. Trying to escape this struggle is the antithesis of *dīn* itself.

If we look at *ḥajj*, for example, we see that people today are looking for a five-star, first class treatment seeking the most comfortable package they can find. But the reality of *ḥajj* is hardship and struggle. Trying to remove the element of struggle from *ḥajj* is like to trying to remove the quality of wetness from water. Similarly, if one considers *zakāh*, *ṣalāh*, or dietary restrictions

(including the prohibition of alcohol), they will notice that these things demand utilizing one's willpower and opposing the lower desires (*nafs*). There is no way around experiencing hardship.

The following pages contain advice from Mawlānā Ashraf ʿAli Thānwī from a collection of his sayings titled, "*Anfās-e-ʿĪsā*."

THE CURE TO ALL EVIL CHARACTERISTICS

A disciple (*murid*) wrote to Mawlānā Thānwī about his condition saying, "I am involved in the sin of lustful glances. I always turn to repentance and asking for forgiveness (*istighfār*) whenever I perpetrate the sin, but still my heart remains as filthy as ever."

In response to this letter Mawlānā Thānwī ﷺ writes:

> The heart is not purified [of bad habits] so quickly[19]—simply by seeking forgiveness (*istighfār*). It is only able

19— By sincerely seeking forgiveness from Allah (*istighfār*), the sin is immediately and completely forgiven. However, the darkness of the act may have left an effect on one's character; so, even though the sin is forgiven and the heart is purified of it, the habit that was formed by repeatedly committing that sin will still require effort to remove.

> to acquire purity and allow light (*nūr*) to return when you vehemently restrain yourself and withhold the urge to look whenever the opportunity to commit this sin presents itself. For this, you need to have strong determination and willpower.

At another juncture, Mawlānā Thānwī says:

> Rectifying one's actions and reforming the heart is done in the following way: the temptations of the lower desires (*nafs*) should be forcefully opposed; [the *nafs* should] be made accustomed to tolerating the hardships of such opposition."

HOW TO BUILD DETERMINATION & WILLPOWER

Mawlānā Thānwī ﷺ said:

> Strength is only built through actively using one's willpower and determination. In using willpower, one does not need [physical] strength; rather, they simply need a firm resolution to do something, even if it means that

they have to force themself—vigorously, if need be—and go to further extents to inconvenience themself.

Consider the example of the student. In order to develop academic competency, they need to actively study, research, and engage in academic discussions. If the student simply sits and waits for academic strength and intelligence to arrive out of nowhere, without any study and effort on their part, they will only be deprived. It goes without saying that in order to achieve anything, one needs to actively adopt a course of determination.

In the discussion of using pure willpower to overcome sin, it is often asked, "How do I use my willpower? I have tried to use my willpower repeatedly, and have failed everytime. Everyone knows that trying to quit "cold-turkey" is often unsuccessful."

The elders of *taṣawwuf* (*mashāyikh*) have distilled techniques from the Qur'ān and *sunnah* to help us develop our willpower. These techniques can be divided into three broad categories: changing our thoughts (*murāqabah*), changing our environment and company (*suḥbah*), and spiritual practices (*riyāḍāt*).

CHANGING OUR THOUGHTS: REFLECTION AND FORBEARANCE

Ḥakīm al-Ummah ﷺ said:

> The cure to all evil traits is reflection and forbearance (*ta'ammul* and *taḥammul*). First, to reflect before doing any action, "Is this action permitted in the *sharī'āh*?" Second, to exercise forbearance and not rush into an action without considering its consequences.

Persistently going through this exercise will create a sense of accountability within one.

CHANGING OUR THOUGHTS: A MEDITATION THAT WILL ASSIST IN LEAVING SIN

Ḥakīm al-Ummah ﷺ said:

> If the temptation to commit a sin—such as casting lustful glances—dominates you, immediately ask yourself,

"What if my teacher or mentor were watching me at this exact moment as I am staring lustfully? Knowing this, I would never commit such an action. Now, taking into consideration the fact that I know that Allah ﷻ definitely sees me at all times and is fully aware of my states, how can I possibly commit this sin?"

...The result of His knowing and seeing me in sin will ultimately be His wrath, His reckoning and punishment on that Day. If He deals with me according to the measure of justice that I deserve, then what will be my state? Constant meditation of this will lead to success, *inshā'Allah*. [END QUOTE]

CHANGING OUR ENVIRONMENT & COMPANY: AVOIDING THE AVENUES OF SIN

Our beloved *shaykh*, Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Shāh Hakīm Muḥammad Akhtar ﷺ said:

> It is not sufficient to simply avoid the sin, one must also avoid the places and avenues that lead to that sin. If we know that going to a specific place or interacting with a

> specific person is going to drag us into sin and temptation, then that place or person must be avoided at all costs.

This point contains one of the most crucial principles of guarding oneself from sins. Relapse and constant return to temptation[20] and sin is very common and in order to break the unending cycle that *shayṭān* loves to drag us into, one must necessarily avoid all the stimuli that incite and provoke the desire to sin.

The Prophet ﷺ tells us the story of a man from Banī Isrā'īl who killed ninety-nine people and then went to a monk, seeking repentance. The monk told him that there was no hope for him due to the gravity of his sin, which enraged the killer even more. So, he killed the monk and thus made it one hundred.

After that he approached a saintly scholar seeking the same. He gave him hope of Allah's mercy and encouraged him to leave the land of sin and go to the land of the pious people for redemption. The man passed away on his journey and ultimately, Allah forgave him and pardoned his sins.

20— There is a difference between temptations that arise randomly and are out of our control, and those that we incite by intentionally exposing ourselves to environmental triggers. Those that arise on their own, we are not accountable for and in fact serve as means of drawing closer to Allah when we refuse to submit to them. However, what is being mentioned here is intentionally inciting one's lower desires (*nafs*) and heightening the temptation to do wrong by unwisely putting oneself in bad company or places, thus making it difficult to avoid sin.

Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī ﷺ in Fatḥ al-Bārī mentions a beneficial point in the commentary of this *ḥadīth*:

> In this story we see the virtue of leaving the place in which one had committed sin due to the fact that one will be overcome by habit to fall into sin again. This happens either because that place is reminiscent of his old ways, or because of the evil present in that environment, or due to the fact that there are people or things there that will make that sin easy to commit. That is why in the end of this *ḥadīth*, the saintly scholar told him to never return to the land of sin. This *ḥadīth* indicates that it is necessary for a repentant person to leave all the conditions which they had become accustomed to in their time of sin and completely abandon them.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES: A PROGRAM TO CURE SEVERE ADDICTION TO SIN

The following prescription was given by Ḥakīm al-Ummah ﷺ to someone who complained of sex-addiction:

The cure to all severe addiction to sin is using one's determination and willpower (*himmah*). This is a suggested program for doing so:

- Spend forty days in seclusion in a place that is far from the environment of sin.
- Do not unnecessarily speak to anyone—unless out of dire need.
- Do not sit or interact with anyone other than when attending the majlis of the *shaykh*.
- Fast for three days consecutively and fulfill all your [prescribed] devotions (*waẓīfahs*) and in whatever time remains, occupy yourself with seeking forgiveness (*istighfār*) and offering optional prayers.
- Fervently abstain from all sins.
- After applying this method for forty days, inform the *shaykh* of your condition.

RAYS OF LIGHT

SECTION THREE

The Remembrance of Allah—Dhikr

THE IMPORTANCE OF ALLAH'S REMEMBRANCE

Ḥaḍrat Muftī Maḥmūd Ḥasan Gangōhī ﵀ said:

> Anyone who has gained anything on this path has gained it through Allah's blessed remembrance (*dhikr*). Mawlānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangōhī became who he was through *dhikr* and so it is with all those who become close to Allah."

This powerful quote from the Grand Muftī of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband encapsulates a secret of the path of Allah—the powerful effect of Allah's remembrance (*dhikr*) upon the one remembering Him (*dhākir*).

DHIKR: NOURISHMENT FOR THE SOUL

Just as the body needs nourishment to survive, in the form of food and water; the soul needs nourishment as well, in the form of the remembrance of Allah (*dhikr*).

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "The example of the one who remembers his Lord and the one who does not remember his Lord is like that of the living and the dead."[21]

The one who feeds their body but deprives their soul may seem alive, but in actuality they are dead. They become like bodies without souls, wandering aimlessly, chasing worldly pursuits. Their aim in life is no different than that of an animal; they are simply going through the motions to fulfill their base desires, with no greater purpose in sight.

21—Bukhārī

As for the one who remembers Allah (*dhākir*), they eat to live and they live to worship and glorify their Lord and Sustainer. They carry within themselves a light and effulgence which they spread wherever they go:

أَوَمَن كَانَ مَيْتًا فَأَحْيَيْنَاهُ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُ نُورًا يَمْشِي بِهِ فِي النَّاسِ
كَمَن مَّثَلُهُ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ لَيْسَ بِخَارِجٍ مِّنْهَا
كَذَٰلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

"Is he who was dead [[without faith due to ignorance and disbelief]] and then We gave him life [[through knowledge and faith]] and bestowed him a light whereby he walks amongst men, like the one who is in the darkness [[of ignorance and disbelief]] from which he can never come out? Thus, it is made fair-seeming to the disbelievers that which they used to do."[22]

The strength of a human being does not come from physical nourishment alone, but also through Allah's remembrance (*dhikr*). The stronger the *dhikr*, the stronger the soul. Conversely, the weaker the *dhikr*, the weaker the soul. It is therefore essential in the battle against the lower desires (*nafs*) and *shayṭān* that the soul (*rūh*) be well-nourished and strong. Otherwise, one's collapse

22—Al-Anʿām 6:122

can come from just a few hard blows from the enemy. This is why our beloved Mawlānā Shāh Ḥakīm Muḥammad Akhtar ﷺ used to say, "The absence of *dhikr* is deprivation of the soul."

THE EFFECT OF DHIKR UPON THE HEART

In *Kitāb al-Lumaʿ* it is mentioned that when Shaykh Ibn ʿAtāʾ al-Bahgdādī ﷺ was asked about the effect of the remembrance of Allah (*dhikr*) upon the heart, he beautifully explained:

> When the light of Allah's *dhikr* penetrates the heart, it removes carnal tendencies and causes one's lower desires to dissipate.

Just like specific foods have physical and psychological effects, so does Allah's remembrance. When the light of *dhikr* enters the heart, the beastly traits are minimized and the angelic and spiritual (*ruḥānī*) traits are increased. When the angelic traits increase, the allure of and attraction to carnal (*nafsānī*) pleasures diminishes.

MAWLĀNĀ RŪMĪ'S EXPLANATION OF THE EFFECT OF DHIKR ON THE NAFS

Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī ﷺ likens the lower desires (*nafs*) to a raging fire, which cannot be extinguished except by the cool shining light of Allah's remembrance (*dhikr*).

نار شهوت را چه چاره نور دین
نورُکم اطفاءُ نارِ الکافرین

چه کشد این نار را نور خد
نور ابراهیم را ساز اوستد

تا ز نار نفس چون نمرود تو
وا رهد این جسم همچون عود تو

What is the remedy for the fire of lust? The light of Dīn,
The light of Dīn is the extinguisher
of the fire of the disbelievers.

What kills this fire? The light of God.
Make the light of Ibrāhīm your teacher

That this body of yours that resembles wood,
May be delivered from the fire of the Namrūd-like[23] (*nafs*)[24]

SHAYKH AḤMAD ZARRŪQ ON THE EFFECTS OF DHIKR

Shaykh Aḥmad Zarrūq ﷺ mentions:

> The light of Allah's remembrance (*dhikr*) scorches away one's malicious traits. This *dhikr*, by its very nature, takes the base self (*nafs*) out of its normal state [of constantly inciting one to commit evil]. It is for this reason that the elders (*mashāyikh*) of *taṣawwuf*[25] prescribe *ṣalawāt*[26] upon the Prophet ﷺ. Its effect is like water that nourishes and quenches, and takes away the "heat" of the lower self...[27]

23—Nimrod (Namrūd) was an ancient Babylonian king who persecuted the believers; whom Ibrāhīm ﷺ defeated in a debate, as is mentioned in the Qur'ān.
24—*Mathnawī*
25—The study of that all that leads to *iḥsān*: purification of the heart and developing a connection with Allah. In English this is called Sufism.
26—To ask Allah to bestow peace and blessings upon the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. Abū Hurayrah ﷺ narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Whoever prays for Allah's blessings upon me once, will be blessed by Allah ten times." (Muslim, Nasā'ī, Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī)
27—*Qawā'id al-Taṣawwuf*

QĀḌĪ THANĀ'ULLĀH PĀNIPATĪ ON THE EFFECTS OF THE KALIMAH

Qāḍī Thanā'ullāh Pānipatī al-Naqshbandī ﷺ mentions:

> Even though '*lā ilāha ill-Allāh*' has the effect of removing 'external *kufr*' (i.e., disbelief), the heart nevertheless continues to struggle from the effect of sins that pollute it (such as the internal diseases of pride, envy, rebelliousness, disobedience of Allah, etc.).

The Prophet ﷺ advised his companions saying, "Renew your faith." They asked, "How shall we renew our faith?" He replied, "Renew your faith by [abundant] recitation of '*lā ilāha ill-Allāh*.'"[28]

This is why the elders of *taṣawwuf* (*mashāyikh*) of all *silsilahs*[29] instruct their disciples (*murīds*) to make this *dhikr* in order to remove the internal pollution that sin creates within the heart. Some of them prescribe that it should be done audibly, and we [the Naqshbandiyyah] suffice on silent *dhikr*."[30]

28— Aḥmad and Ḥākim
29— Just as there are multiple valid schools of jurisprudence (*madhhabs* of *fiqh*) there are multiple valid schools of Sufism that are known as *silsilahs*.
30— *Irshād al-Ṭālibīn*

A DAILY REGIMEN OF DHIKR

We have now understood the importance of having a regimen of remembering Allah (*dhikr*) to keep the base self (*nafs*) and its demands under control. We prescribe here the remembrances (*dhikr*), supplications (*duʿāʾ*), and prayers for protection (*istiʿādhah*) taught to us by the Noble Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself. The evident superiority of this regimen lies in the perfection of the one who presented them. Each of these are authentically transmitted through sound *ḥadīth*.

The Noble Muhammadan Litany

IMMEDIATELY AFTER EVERY FARḌ ṢALAT

- Recite *Āyah al-Kursī* (al-Baqarah 2:255).

اللهُ لاَ إِلٰهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّوْمُ لاَ تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَةٌ وَلاَ نَوْمٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الأَرْضِ
مَنْ ذَا الَّذِيْ يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلاَّ بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيْهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلاَ يُحِيْطُوْنَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ
عِلْمِهِ إِلاَّ بِمَا شَاء وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلاَ يَؤُوْدُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيْمُ

Allah: there is no god but Him, the Ever-Living, the All-Sustaining. Neither drowsiness nor sleep overcome Him. To Him alone belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Who can possibly intercede with Him except with His permission? He [fully] knows whatever is before them and whatever shall be after them, while they do not grasp anything of His knowledge except what He has willed. His Kursī (Divine Throne) extends over the heavens and the earth; their preservation tires Him not. And He is the Exalted, the Magnificent.

- Recite 33x each: سُبْحَانَ اللهِ ، اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ ، اَللهُ أَكْبَرُ
  Glory be to Allah, All praise is due to Allah, Allah is the greatest

And recite once: لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيْكَ لَهُ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ
وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ، وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ

There is no god but Allah alone; He has no partner. To Him belongs the dominion, to Him belongs all praise. And He is Powerful over all things.

EVERY MORNING AND EVENING, RECITE THREE TIMES EACH

Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ (#112), Sūrah al-Falaq (#113), Sūrah al-Nās (#114):

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ ۞ قُلْ هُوَ اللهُ أَحَدٌ ۞ اللهُ الصَّمَدُ ۞
لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُوْلَدْ ۞ وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ ۞

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ ۞ قُلْ أَعُوْذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ ۞ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ ۞ وَمِنْ شَرِّ
غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ ۞ وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ ۞ وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ ۞

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ ۞ قُلْ أَعُوْذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ ۞ مَلِكِ النَّاسِ ۞ إِلٰهِ النَّاسِ ۞ مِنْ
شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ ۞ الَّذِيْ يُوَسْوِسُ فِيْ صُدُوْرِ النَّاسِ ۞ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ ۞

Say: "He is Allah, The One. Allah, The Ever-Lasting Sustainer of all. He begets not, nor was He begotten. And there is none like unto Him."

Say: "I seek refuge with the Lord of Daybreak, from the evil of what He has created. And from the evil of the darkness when it gathers. And from the evil of the women who blow [witchcraft] on knots. And from the evil of the envier when he envies."

Say: "I seek refuge with the Lord of mankind. The King of mankind. The God of mankind. From the evil of the insidious whisperer, who whispers into the hearts of mankind. From amongst the jinn and from mankind."

-1- We have entered the morning; and this morning, the entire dominion belongs to Allah. All praise is due to Allah. There is no god but Allah alone; He has no partner. The dominion belongs to Him alone; to Him belongs all praise; and He is powerful over all things. My Lord, I ask You for the good that is in this day and the good that comes after it. And I seek Your protection from the evil that is in this day and from the evil that comes after it. My Lord, I seek Your protection from laziness and the difficulties and harms of old age. My Lord, I seek Your protection from the torment of the Hell-fire and the punishment of the grave.-2-We have entered the morning; and this morning, the entire dominion belongs to Allah. All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds. O Allah, I ask You for the goodness of this day: its victory, its assistance, its light, its blessings and its guidance. And I seek Your protection from the evil that is in it and from the evil that comes after it.-3-O Allah, by You we entered the morning and by You we entered the evening. And by You, we live and by You we die. And unto You is the resurrection.-4-We have entered the morning upon the natural disposition of Islam, upon the statement of pure faith, upon the religion of our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and upon the way of our father Ibrāhīm, who was solely devoted to Allah, submitting to Him alone, and he was not of the idolators.-5-O Allah, whatever bounties I or any of your creation have entered into this morning with, they have been granted by You alone; You have no partner. So, all praise and all thanks is owed to You alone.-6-O Allah, I have entered the morning and call on You to witness... and I call on the bearers of Your Throne, and Your angels, and all of Your creation to witness: that surely You are Allah, there is no god but You alone; You have no partners. And that Muhammad ﷺ is Your slave and Your Messenger.-7-O Allah, I ask of you beneficial knowledge, pure and wholesome sustenance, and deeds that are accepted.-8-We have entered the evening; and this evening, the entire dominion belongs to Allah. All praise is due to Allah. There is no god but Allah alone; He has no partner. The dominion belongs to Him alone; to Him belongs all praise; and He is powerful over all things. My Lord, I ask You for the good that is in this night and

EVERY MORNING, RECITE THE FOLLOWING SUPPLICATIONS

1- أَصْبَحْنَا وَأَصْبَحَ الْمُلْكُ لِلّٰهِ، وَالْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ، لاَ إِلٰهَ إِلاَّ اللهُ وَحْدَهُ لاَ شَرِيْكَ لَهُ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ، رَبِّ أَسْأَلُكَ خَيْرَ مَا فِيْ هَذَا الْيَوْمِ وَخَيْرَ مَا بَعْدَهُ، وَأَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا فِيْ هَذَا الْيَوْمِ وَشَرِّ مَا بَعْدَهُ، رَبِّ أَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْكَسَلِ وَسُوْءِ الْكِبَرِ، رَبِّ أَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ عَذَابٍ فِي النَّارِ وَعَذَابٍ فِي الْقَبْرِ

2- أَصْبَحْنَا وَأَصْبَحَ الْمُلْكُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِيْنَ، اَللّٰهُمَّ إِنِّيْ أَسْأَلُكَ خَيْرَ هَذَا الْيَوْمِ: فَتْحَهُ، وَنَصْرَهُ، وَنُوْرَهُ، وَبَرَكَتَهُ، وَهُدَاهُ، وَأَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا فِيْهِ وَشَرِّ مَا بَعْدَهُ

3- اَللّٰهُمَّ بِكَ أَصْبَحْنَا، وَبِكَ أَمْسَيْنَا ، وَبِكَ نَحْيَا، وَبِكَ نَمُوْتُ وَإِلَيْكَ النُّشُوْرُ

4- أَصْبَحْنَا عَلَى فِطْرَةِ الْإِسْلاَمِ، وَعَلَى كَلِمَةِ الْإِخْلاَصِ، وَعَلَى دِيْنِ نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ ﷺ، وَعَلَى مِلَّةِ أَبِيْنَا إِبْرَاهِيْمَ ، حَنِيْفًا مُسْلِمًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ -5- اَللّٰهُمَّ مَا أَصْبَحَ بِيْ مِنْ نِعْمَةٍ أَوْ بِأَحَدٍ مِنْ خَلْقِكَ فَمِنْكَ وَحْدَكَ لَا شَرِيْكَ لَكَ، فَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ وَلَكَ الشُّكْرُ -6- اَللّٰهُمَّ إِنِّيْ أَصْبَحْتُ أُشْهِدُكَ، وَأُشْهِدُ حَمَلَةَ عَرْشِكَ، وَمَلَائِكَتَكَ، وَجَمِيْعَ خَلْقِكَ، أَنَّكَ أَنْتَ اللهُ لَا إِلٰهَ إِلاَّ أَنْتَ وَحْدَكَ لاَ شَرِيْكَ لَكَ، وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُكَ وَرَسُوْلُكَ (recite 4 times) -7- اَللّٰهُمَّ إِنِّيْ أَسْأَلُكَ عِلْمًا نَافِعًا، وَرِزْقًا طَيِّبًا، وَعَمَلاً مُتَقَبَّلاً

IN THE EVENING, RECITE THE FOLLOWING SUPPLICATIONS

8- أَمْسَيْنَا وَأَمْسَى الْمُلْكُ لِلّٰهِ ، وَالْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ، لاَ إِلٰهَ إِلاَّ اللهُ وَحْدَهُ لاَ شَرِيْكَ لَهُ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ، رَبِّ أَسْأَلُكَ خَيْرَ مَا فِي هَذِهِ اللَّيْلَةِ وَخَيْرَ مَا بَعْدَهَا، وَأَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا فِيْ هَذِهِ اللَّيْلَةِ وَشَرِّ مَا بَعْدَهَا، رَبِّ

the good that comes after it. And I seek Your protection from the evil that is in this night and from the evil that comes after it. My Lord, I seek Your protection from laziness and the difficulties and harms of old age. My Lord, I seek Your protection from the torment of the Hell-fire and the punishment of the grave.-9-We have entered the evening; and this evening, the entire dominion belongs to Allah. All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds. O Allah, I ask You for the goodness of this night: its victory, its assistance, its light, its blessings and its guidance. And I seek Your protection from the evil that is in it and from the evil that comes after it.-10-O Allah, by You we entered the evening and by You we entered the morning. And by You, we live and by You we die. And unto You is our return.-11-We have entered the evening upon the natural disposition of Islam, upon the statement of pure faith, upon the religion of our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and upon the way of our father Ibrāhīm, who was solely devoted to Allah, submitting to Him alone, and he was not of the idolators.-12-O Allah, whatever bounties I or any of your creation have entered into this evening with, they have been granted by You alone; You have no partner. So, all praise and all thanks is owed to You alone.-13-O Allah, I have entered the evening and call on You to witness... and I call on the bearers of Your Throne, and Your angels, and all of Your creation to witness: that surely You are Allah, there is no god but You alone; You have no partners. And that Muhammad ﷺ is Your slave and Your Messenger.-14-O Allah, Knower of the Unseen (*ghayb*) and the Seen, Creator of the heavens and the earth, the Lord of all things and their Sovereign, I bear witness that there is no god but You. I seek Your protection from the evil of my own self, from the evil of *shaytān* and the polytheism to which he calls, and from perpetrating any evil against myself, or bringing any evil upon any Muslim.-15-O the Ever-Living, O the All-Sustaining, I seek assistance through Your mercy. Rectify for me all of my affairs; and do not entrust me to my own self for even the blink of an eye.-16-O Allah, I ask You for pardon and well-being in this world and in the Hereafter. O Allah, I ask You for pardon and well-being in my religion, in my worldly

أَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْكَسَلِ وَسُوْءِ الْكِبَرِ، رَبِّ أَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ عَذَابٍ فِي النَّارِ وَعَذَابٍ فِي الْقَبْرِ -9- أَمْسَيْنَا وَأَمْسَى الْمُلْكُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِيْنَ، اَللّٰهُمَّ إِنِّيْ أَسْأَلُكَ خَيْرَ هَذِهِ اللَّيْلَةِ : فَتْحَهَا، وَنَصْرَهَا، وَنُوْرَهَا، وَبَرَكَتَهَا، وَهُدَاهَا، وَأَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا فِيْهَا وَشَرِّ مَا بَعْدَهَا -10- اَللّٰهُمَّ بِكَ أَصْبَحْنَا، وَبِكَ أَمْسَيْنَا، وَبِكَ نَحْيَا، وَبِكَ نَمُوْتُ وَإِلَيْكَ النُّشُوْرُ -11- أَمْسَيْنَا عَلَى فِطْرَةِ الْإِسْلَامِ، وَعَلَى كَلِمَةِ الْإِخْلَاصِ، وَعَلَى دِيْنِ نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ ﷺ، وَعَلَى مِلَّةِ أَبِيْنَا إِبْرَاهِيْمَ ، حَنِيْفًا مُسْلِمًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ -12- اَللّٰهُمَّ مَا أَمْسَى بِيْ مِنْ نِعْمَةٍ أَوْ بِأَحَدٍ مِنْ خَلْقِكَ فَمِنْكَ وَحْدَكَ لَا شَرِيْكَ لَكَ، فَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ وَلَكَ الشُّكْرُ -13- اَللّٰهُمَّ إِنِّيْ أَمْسَيْتُ أُشْهِدُكَ، وَأُشْهِدُ حَمَلَةَ عَرْشِكَ، وَمَلَائِكَتَكَ، وَجَمِيْعَ خَلْقِكَ، أَنَّكَ أَنْتَ اللهُ لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ وَحْدَكَ لَا شَرِيْكَ لَكَ، وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُكَ وَرَسُوْلُكَ (recite 4 times)

RECITE THE FOLLOWING SUPPLICATIONS AND DHIKRS BOTH IN THE MORNING AND EVENING

-14- اَللّٰهُمَّ عَالِمَ الغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَاطِرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ، رَبَّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَمَلِيْكَهُ، أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَّا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ ، أَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ نَفْسِيْ، وَمِنْ شَرِّ الشَّيْطَانِ وَشَرَكِهِ ، وَأَنْ أَقْتَرِفَ عَلَى نَفْسِيْ سُوْءًا، أَوْ أَجُرَّهُ إِلَى مُسْلِمٍ -15- يَا حَيُّ يَا قَيُّوْمُ بِرَحْمَتِكَ أَسْتَغِيْثُ أَصْلِحْ لِيْ شَأْنِيْ كُلَّهُ وَلَا تَكِلْنِيْ إِلَى نَفْسِيْ طَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ -16- اَللّٰهُمَّ إِنِّيْ أَسْأَلُكَ الْعَفْوَ وَالْعَافِيَةَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ ، اَللّٰهُمَّ إِنِّيْ أَسْأَلُكَ الْعَفْوَ وَالْعَافِيَةَ: فِيْ دِيْنِيْ وَدُنْيَايَ وَأَهْلِيْ، وَمَالِيْ، اَللّٰهُمَّ اسْتُرْ عَوْرَاتِيْ، وَآمِنْ رَوْعَاتِيْ، اَللّٰهُمَّ احْفَظْنِيْ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيَّ، وَمِنْ خَلْفِيْ، وَعَنْ يَمِيْنِيْ، وَعَنْ شِمَالِيْ، وَمِنْ فَوْقِيْ، وَأَعُوْذُ بِعَظَمَتِكَ أَنْ أُغْتَالَ مِنْ تَحْتِيْ

affairs, in my family, and in my wealth. O Allah, conceal my faults and calm my fears. O Allah, guard me from in front of me and behind me, from my right, and from my left, and from above me. And I seek protection in Your Greatness from being taken unaware by a calamity from beneath me.-17-O Allah, grant me well-being in my body. O Allah, grant me well-being in my hearing. O Allah, grant me well-being in my sight. There is no god but You. O Allah, I seek Your protection from disbelief and neediness, and I seek Your protection from the punishment of the grave. There is no god but You.-18-Allah is sufficient for me. There is no god but Him. I have placed my trust in Him alone. And He is the Lord of the Mighty Throne.-19-In the Name of Allah, by whose Name, nothing in the earth nor in the sky can cause any harm. And He is the All-Hearing and All-Knowing.-20-I seek protection through the perfect words of Allah from the evil of whatever He has created.-21-I am pleased with Allah as my Lord, with Islām as my religion, and with Muhammad ﷺ as my Prophet.-22-Glory be to Allah with His praise, equal to the number of His creation, equal to what pleases Him, equal to the weight of His throne, and equal to the [endless] ink of His words.-23-Glory be to Allah with His praise.-24-There is no god but Allah alone; He has no partner. To Him belongs the dominion, to Him belongs all praise. And He is Powerful over all things. -25-O Allah, You are my Lord. There is no one worthy of worship besides You. You have created me, and I am Your slave, and I am trying to fulfill my promise and covenant to You as best as I can. I seek protection in You from the evil of what I have perpetrated. I acknowledge Your favors upon me and I acknowledge my sins: so forgive me. Verily, there is none who forgives sins besides You. -26-My Lord, forgive me and accept my repentance. Indeed, You are the Acceptor of Repentance, the Merciful. -27-O Allah, send your peace and blessings upon our Prophet Muhammad.

-17- اَللّٰهُمَّ عَافِنِيْ فِيْ دِيْنِيْ،اَللّٰهُمَّ عَافِنِيْ فِيْ سَمْعِيْ، اَللّٰهُمَّ عَافِنِيْ فِيْ بَصَرِيْ، لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ، اَللّٰهُمَّ إِنِّيْ أَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْكُفْرِ وَالْفَقْرِ، وَأَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ، لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ (recite 3 times) -18- حَسْبِيَ اللّٰهُ لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَهُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيْمِ (recite 7 times) -19- بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الَّذِيْ لَا يَضُرُّ مَعَ اسْمِهِ شَيْءٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَهُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ (recite 3 times) -20- أَعُوْذُ بِكَلِمَاتِ اللّٰهِ التَّامَّاتِ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ (recite 3 times) -21- رَضِيْتُ بِاللّٰهِ رَبًّا، وَبِالْإِسْلَامِ دِيْنًا، وَبِمُحَمَّدٍ ﷺ نَبِيًّا (recite 3 times) -22- سُبْحَانَ اللّٰهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ عَدَدَ خَلْقِهِ ، وَرِضَا نَفْسِهِ ، وَزِنَةَ عَرْشِهِ ، وَمِدَادَ كَلِمَاتِهِ (recite 3 times) -23- سُبْحَانَ اللّٰهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ (recite 100 times) -24- لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيْكَ لَهُ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ، وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ (recite 1, 10, or 100 times) -25- اَللّٰهُمَّ أَنْتَ رَبِّيْ لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ، خَلَقْتَنِيْ وَأَنَا عَبْدُكَ، وَأَنَا عَلَى عَهْدِكَ وَوَعْدِكَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ، أَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا صَنَعْتُ، أَبُوْءُ لَكَ بِنِعْمَتِكَ عَلَيَّ، وَأَبُوْءُ بِذَنْبِيْ فَاغْفِرْ لِيْ فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوْبَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ -26- رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِيْ، وَتُبْ عَلَيَّ، إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيْمُ (recite 100 times) -27- اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلَى نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ (recite 100 times)

◆ Everyday, read as much Qur'ān as possible. Read a portion in Arabic and read a portion from its translation. If you are unable to read the Qur'ān in Arabic with *tajwīd*, make it a priority to learn to do so from a qualified teacher.

◆ Continue to learn and recite the daily *du'ās* and *dhikrs* that are found in the *sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ. This litany only serves as a starting point; spiritual aspirants should strive for more.

THE SPIRITUAL POWER OF ADHERING TO THE PROPHETIC WAY

The most brilliant spiritual light and the most powerful dispeller of darkness that can shine upon the heart is none other than the light of guidance manifested in the teachings and *sunnah* of our Beloved Master Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Allah ﷻ says:

قَدْ جَاءَكُم مِّنَ اللهِ نُورٌ وَكِتَابٌ مُّبِينٌ

Verily a light has come to you from Allah
and a clear Book.[31]

Imām Ṭabarī ﷺ commenting on this verse says:

> [This light refers to] Muhammad (Allah bless him and grant him peace), through whom Allah brought to light the truth. Through him Allah manifested Islam to the world. Through him Allah dispelled the darkness of polytheism and disbelief. Thus, he is a light for those who wish to become enlightened with the truth.

31— Al-Mā'idah 5:15

Elsewhere, Allah Taʿālā describes His beloved Prophet ﷺ as "an illuminating lamp:"

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا
وَدَاعِيًا إِلَى اللهِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَسِرَاجًا مُّنِيرًا

O Prophet, indeed We have sent you as a witness, a giver of glad-tidings, and a warner. [And We have sent you] as a caller to Allah by His permission and as an illuminating lamp.[32]

Therefore, his teachings, his *sunnah*, his character, and everything attached to his blessed and noble entity dispels darkness and illuminates.

The secret behind the loftiness of the prophetic way is that Allah ﷻ Himself has chosen our Master Muhammad—from pre-eternity—to be followed and taken as a role model in every aspect of life. Allah ﷻ clearly states:

لَّقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ

Verily in the Messenger of Allah, there is for you
a most beautiful exemplar[33]

32— Al-Aḥzāb 33:45-46
33— Al-Aḥzāb 33:21

قُلْ إِن كُنتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي
يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ

Say to them (O Muḥammad ﷺ): "If you truly love Allah then follow me, Allah will love you and forgive you your sins."[34]

The love of Allah is the final destination of all spiritual journeys—there is no destination or station beyond this. When one reaches the station of Allah's love through adherence to the Muhammadan Way, all veils are lifted, all darkness is dispelled, and all spiritual benefits are achieved.

THE SECRET OF THE MUHAMMADAN PATH

The secret behind the loftiness of the Muhammadan Path of spirituality and its superiority over all other paths is its connection to the celestial realm of Mala' al-A'lā',[35] its direct link to the Lord of the Worlds, and its abrogation of all other laws that came before it. For every other path in this lowly, temporary

34— Āl 'Imrān 3:31

35— This refers to the celestial realm of the angels. It is from where the Divine decrees of Allah descend down to the lower realms.

world is either the result of trial and error, or conjured by mere intellects (which are deficient by their very nature), or the result of devilish insinuations. All these means of making a path for oneself are weak and deficient, but the way of Muḥammad ﷺ can have no imperfections, because it comes directly from above and is thus protected from devilish insinuations and the promptings of the lower-self (*nafs*).

His pure heart was the place of descent for Divine revelation and his constant link to Allah would not cease for a single moment; such that he was spiritually aware even in a state of sleeping.[36] Therefore, any knowledge, wisdom, actions, deeds, and practices that came from him were perfectly aligned with the celestial realm, blessed with Divine effulgence, and perfumed by the winds of Godly grace.

Do not let the simplicity or ease of the prophetic practices deceive you, for verily any action or deed that emanated from Allah's Beloved ﷺ was great in the sight of his Lord. May Allah enable us to connect our hearts and souls to the prophetic way. *Āmīn.*

Shaykh Aḥmad Zarrūq ﷺ said:

> The foundations of our path are five:
> • *Taqwā*—mindfulness of Allah—privately and publicly.

36—'Ā'ishah ﷺ narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "O 'Ā'ishah, my eyes sleep, but my heart does not sleep." (Bukhārī and Muslim)

- Adherence to the *sunnah* in word and deed.
- Indifference to whether others accept or reject one.
- Contentment with Allah in times of both hardship and ease.
- Turning to Allah in both prosperity and adversity.

Another way to understand the brilliant light of our Prophet ﷺ is through his illustrious companions. If there was no miracle of the Prophet ﷺ other than his companions, then they would suffice. Imagine a people who were ignorant, harsh, unrefined, and hostile in nature. When the guiding light of the Prophet ﷺ reached them, they became beacons of guidance for humanity. Such that each and every one of them could then be considered a guiding-light on their own. The light of the Prophet ﷺ and his *sunnah* is so brilliant that any companion it shone upon became more superior than the highest and most righteous saintly figures who ever lived or will live. They became nothing short of the most virtuous of human beings after the prophets and messengers themselves.

After the demise of the Prophet ﷺ, this prophetic light could still be attained through the company of those who had attained that light. Generation after generation, from heart to heart, through the preservation and implementation of the *sunnah*, this light is passed down. Till this very day, those who connect themselves to this unbroken chain become illuminated and guided. Those who cannot find anyone connected to that unbroken chain can

still reach the destination if they simply follow in the footsteps of their beloved Prophet ﷺ. Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Ḥakīm Muḥammad Akhtar ؒ would say:

نقشِ قدم نبی کہ ہیں جنت کے راستے
اللہ سے ملاتے ہیں سنت کے راستے

The footsteps of the Prophet are the pathway to paradise,
To Allah leads the path of the sunnah

Ḥakīm al-Ummah, Mawlānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī ؒ says:

The secret behind the unique and special spiritual effect inherent in the *sunnah* lies in the fact that whoever adopts the resemblance of the beloved will also become beloved. [It is as if Allah is saying,] "This person resembles my beloved. [Therefore I will love him as well]" This is the fastest way to attain Allah's love.[37]

Mawlānā Ḥakīm Muḥammad Akhtar ؒ said:

Honor every *sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ and strive to bring all his ways and practices into your life, and see for yourself how much spiritual light comes into your heart. What is the light of the sun and the moon in comparison to the brilliant spiritual effulgence of the Prophetic way?

37— *Malfūẓāt-e-Kamālāt-e-Ashrafiyyah*

It is for this reason that our pious predecessors sacrificed their every moment and their very lives for the *sunnah*. Once, [in the illness of his old-age] Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Muḥammad Aḥmad Ilāhabādī's[38] servant helped him remove his shirt in a manner that was not in accordance with the prophetic way of doing so (*sunnah*), so he ordered him to put the shirt back on him, saying, "You have removed the shirt in the wrong manner. When you are putting on your shirt, first place the right arm in the sleeve, then the left arm. And when you are removing the shirt, first remove the left arm, then the right arm. This is true love for the *sunnah*."

This is why I remind you, my dear friends, that all the prophetic *sunnahs* can be found in the books of *ḥadīth*. I have also compiled a book in this regard titled, "*Beautiful Sunnahs of the Beloved Prophet* ﷺ". Read these books and bring these prophetic practices into your lives. Live your lives according to the prophetic way. We should ask the people of knowledge and those acquainted with the *sunnah* about how to conduct our gatherings—of both happiness and sadness—according to the *sunnah*, and how to conduct our lives as a whole.[39]

38— One of the *shaykhs* of Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Ḥakīm Muḥammad Akhtar ﷺ
39— *Ādāb-e-Ishq-e-Rasūl* ﷺ

The *shaykh* of our *shaykh*, Mawlānā Abrār al-Ḥaqq Ṣāḥib ﷺ said:

> Whichever *sunnah* you are able to immediately implement do so as soon as possible—such as the *sunnahs* of eating, drinking, sleeping and waking. Through the implementation of the *sunnah*, light (*nur*) is developed in the heart. Through this light (*nur*), the soul is nourished and strengthened.
>
> As one continues to apply the easier *sunnahs*, one will gain the strength and ability to implement the more difficult ones. The difficult-to-practice *sunnahs*—which are only difficult because of the opposing environment and culture—will become easier through the strength acquired by acting upon those that are less difficult.[40]

In the lengthy passage that follows, Mujaddid Alf-Thānī, Shaykh Aḥmad Sarhindī ﷺ writes about the power of the *sunnah* in a letter addressed to his disciple:

> Through adherence to the *sunnah* of the Master of the first and last—the one who was created as the best of creation—Allah the Exalted has bestowed upon our spiritually destitute souls this gift: being steadfastness upon even an iota of the *sunnah* is better than all the enjoyments of this life and the Hereafter.

40— *Majālis-e-Abrār*

Virtue is in adherence to his *sunnah* and excellence is contingent upon following his *sharīʿah*. For example, the midday nap that is taken according to his *sunnah* is better than thousands of night vigils that are not from his *sunnah*.

Likewise, eating and breaking the fast on ʿĪd of Fiṭr, which is the command of the Muhammadan *sharīʿah*, is better than a continuous fast that is not ordained by the *sharīʿah*. And spending a single coin in obedience to the command of the *sharīʿah* is better than spending a mountain of gold on one's own accord.

[It has been narrated that] one morning, after completion of the *fajr* prayer, the Leader of the Believers (Amīr al-Muʾminīn), ʿUmar bin al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ noticed that one person was missing from the congregation. After inquiring about him, ʿUmar ﷺ was informed that he was unable to perform the *fajr* prayer with the congregation because he had stayed awake all night in worship and that perhaps he prayed *fajr* at home to take rest.

ʿUmar ﷺ responded that if he were to sleep the entire night and perform the morning prayer with congregation it would have been better for him.

The people of deviation and misguidance perform abundant spiritual exercises and strenuous feats of self-discipline but because their efforts are not in accordance with the sacred *sharīʿah* they are rejected and debased.

If there is some reward that these people attain by performing strenuous spiritual practices, it is restricted to mere worldly benefit. And what is this world and what are its petty benefits that one should give them any regard?

The example of such people—like monks and yogis—is like that of street-sweepers: they work harder than anyone else, yet receive the lowest and most meager wage. And the example of the adherents of the *sharīʿah* and *sunnah* is like the profession of a jeweler who works with precious gems. Theirs is the least physical work of all professions, but their earnings are the highest. The work of one hour in their profession brings returns of hundreds of thousands.

The secret in this is that the actions and practices performed according to the sacred *sharīʿah* are in accordance with Allah's pleasure, whereas the opposite of the *sharīʿah* is against His pleasure. What reward can be expected from Allah's displeasure? Rather, one should expect Divine wrath in place of reward.

Mawlānā Rūmī says:

هرچه گیرد علتی علت شود
کفر گیرد کاملی ملت شود

Whatever is taken by the ill, becomes illness
If 'kufr' is taken by a perfected one,
it is converted to faith.

Therefore, the treasure of complete felicity is in adherence to the *sunnah*, and the essence of all destruction and ruin is in opposing to the sacred *sharīʿah*. [END QUOTE][41]

41—*Maktūbāt* of Imām Rabbānī

SECTION FOUR:

KEEPING THE COMPANY OF THE PIOUS

THE MIRACULOUS EFFECT OF KEEPING THE COMPANY OF THE PIOUS

One of the most effective ways to overcome sin is by keeping the company of the pious. Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Hakīm Akhtar Ṣāḥib ﵀ related that his *shaykh*, Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Shāh ʿAbdul Ghanī ﵀ said, "It may appear that the path to Allah is extremely difficult, but when you cling to the company of a pious saint, the path to Allah not only becomes easy, it becomes enjoyable."

مجھے سہل ہو گئیں منزلیں
کہ ہوا کے رخ بھی بدل گئے

ترا ہاتھ ہاتھ میں آ گیا
کہ چراغ راہ کہ جل گئے

The stations of this journey have become easy for me,
Even the winds of fate have changed their direction,

Since your hand came into my hand,
The lamps of the path have illuminated.

To become someone who finds it easy to avoid all sin, keeping the company of the pious is essential, because we become like those we regularly accompany. We start resembling the people we spend time with and gradually absorb their internal—and even external—qualities. Human beings are in essence creatures of imitation. From the moment a child starts to perceive, they are imitating and mimicking everything that their parents say and do. This is why in the path of self-reformation and attaining a connection with Allah, we must give great importance to being in the company of those whose hearts are illuminated by the light of Allah's love, and whose actions are in accordance with the *sharīʿah* and the *sunnah*. More than anything else we must be watchful and cautious of whom we spend time with.

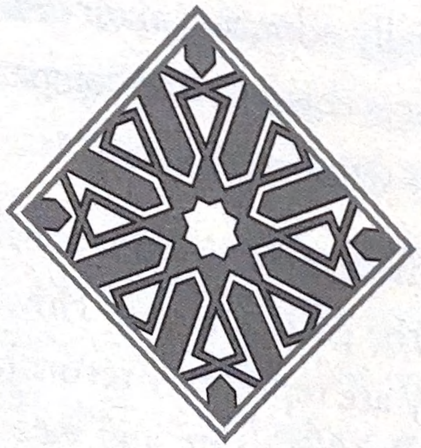
We heard from our beloved *shaykh*, Mawlānā Ḥakīm Akhtar Ṣāḥib, that everything is obtained from its possessor or seller. You get fruit from a fruit-seller, cloth from a cloth-seller, bread from a baker, and so on. Similarly, you will gain Allah from Allah's lovers.

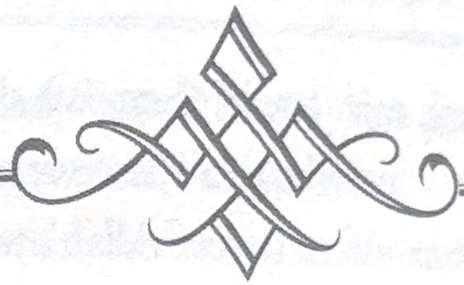
In this day and age, digital and social media also influence our hearts. These avenues of exposure also fall into the category of good or bad company. The people we follow or watch on social media drastically affect our thinking, our hearts and our spirituality. The biggest mistake we can make is to underestimate the effect of the things that we see and hear on a daily basis. When we listen to a podcast, watch a video, or read someone's post, we are essentially adopting their company. Therefore, we should ask ourselves: is this "virtual company" that I am keeping good for my faith or detrimental to it?

Some people remain frustrated by their constant failure in trying to stay steadfast on the path of *taqwā*. However, what they fail to realize is that they are repeatedly returning to evil company, evil websites, and exposure to sin and vice. How will one *not* fall back into foul habits, when they are constantly going back to what incites the lower-self (*nafs*) to sin? Understand this well.

In summary, if one wants to achieve success, they should keep the company of successful people. If one wants to become

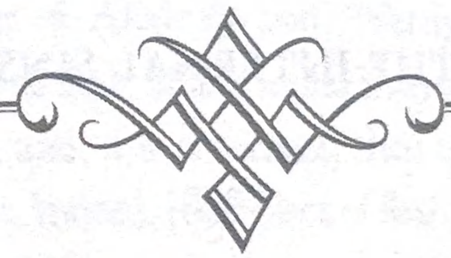
knowledgeable, they should keep the company of knowledgeable people. Similarly, if one wants to become like the righteous—for whom it is easier to avoid sins—then they should keep the company of righteous people. The effect of company is immensely transformative.





SECTION FIVE:

Important Matters Pertaining to Sins



WE CONCLUDE THIS COMPILATION WITH A LIST OF THE internal and external sins, in addition to a list of the harms of sinning. This is because the one who does not know and recognize these perils will eventually fall into them.

Every one of the internal and external sins mentioned below are veils of darkness that block the rays of Divine light from reaching the heart. This is why Allah ﷻ says:

وَذَرُوا ظَاهِرَ الْإِثْمِ وَبَاطِنَهُ

"*Abandon all sin—external and internal.*"[42]

42— Al-Anʿām 6:120

As we read through each one of them, we should reflect upon our own hearts and see which of these we need to remove in order to allow the manifestation of Allah's mercy to enter our innermost beings.

May Allah protect us from all that distances us from His pleasure and guide us to those actions, words, and deeds that will bless us with His pleasure. *Āmīn.*

THE INTERNAL SINS

Imām Ibn Ḥajar al-Haythamī ﷺ writes in *Al-Zawājir:*

> As for the enormities (*kabā'ir*) of the heart, it is obligatory for every Muslim to recognize these diseases so that they can remove them from their heart. The one who meets Allah with any of these diseases will not—Allah forbid—meet Allah with a sound and purified heart...
>
> ...Being afflicted by these [internal] diseases is more blameworthy and detrimental [spiritually] than fornication, theft, drinking alcohol, and other external sins. This is due to the gravity of their repercussions, their tremendously harmful effects, and their utter relentlessness.

> The evil effects of these [internal] sins persist until they become one's constant state, as opposed to some of the external sins which are comparatively easier to deal with and remove. For example, [external sins] can be treated and removed through repentance and seeking Allah's forgiveness. Additionally, they are removed by performing good deeds, which serve as restitution, or [by withstanding afflictions], which serve as atonement.
>
> The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Verily, in the body there is a piece of flesh. If it is sound then the whole body will be sound; and, if it is corrupt, then the whole body will be corrupt. Indeed, [that piece of flesh] is the heart."[43]
>
> Abū Hurayrah ﷺ said, "The heart is the king and the limbs are its army. When the king is righteous then his army is also righteous, but when the king is corrupt then the army carries out his corrupt orders."
>
> Therefore, whoever is bestowed a sound and healthy heart, pure of these diseases, should thank Allah Most High. On the other hand, anyone who finds any of these diseases within, should—as a matter of urgency—take it upon themself to make an effort to remove them. If they do not make the requisite attempt to remove them, then

43— Bukhārī

they remain in sin. But, it should be noted that they will only be sinful if they deliberately intend the sin; not if the thought, notion, or utterance of the sin unintentionally occurs to them.

THE LIST OF INTERNAL SINS:

- Major Shirk (ascribing partners to Allah).
- Minor Shirk: ostentation (*riyā'*).
- Unjustified anger.
- Arrogance, vanity, self-conceit (*kibr* and *'ujb*).
- Deceit.
- Hypocrisy.
- Injustice.
- Disregarding the creation out of pride and despising them (*taḥqīr*).
- Indulging in matters that do not concern one.
- Greed.
- Fear of poverty.
- Being displeased with the Divine decree.
- Admiration for the rich and revering them for their affluence.
- Contempt for the poor due to their poverty.
- Avarice.
- Competing for worldly gain and seeking loftiness through it.
- Adorning oneself for the creation by unlawful means.

- Flattery.
- Seeking praise for that which one has not achieved.
- Seeking the faults of others and being heedless of one's own shortcomings.
- Forgetting Allah's favors.
- Partisanship for other than Allah's Dīn.
- Ingratitude.
- Considering the commandments of Allah unimportant.
- Ridiculing Allah's creation or looking down at them with disdain.
- Following one's caprice and turning away from the truth.
- Treachery and deception.
- Only desiring the life of this world.
- Opposing the truth.
- Harboring suspicions towards a Muslim.
- Rejecting the truth due to dislike or disdain for someone.
- Being pleased with or rejoicing in sin.
- Persistence upon sin, without repentence.
- Love of being praised for righteous deeds.
- Being pleased or contented with the life of this world.

- Heedlessness of Allah and the abode of the Hereafter.
- Becoming angry for the sake of one's ego or taking vengeance for the sake of falsehood.
- Feeling self-secure from the punishment of Allah, thus persisting in sin.
- Being hopeless of Allah's mercy.
- Having negative thoughts of how Allah deals with one.
- Seeking religious knowledge for the sake of worldly gain.
- Concealing knowledge.
- Not acting on one's knowledge.
- Claiming status in knowledge out of haughtiness.
- Belittling the scholars and depreciating their status.
- Deliberately fabricating lies about what Allah and His Messenger said.
- Initiating evil traditions

[END OF TEXT FROM AL-ZAWĀJIR]

Some of the above mentioned points may have certain subtleties that require a deeper explanation. If one has any questions regarding the above sins, they should refer to a qualified scholar (*ʿālim*) for further clarification.

A NOTE ON SINFUL THOUGHTS & SHAYTANIC WHISPERINGS

Apart from these internal sins, each of which is a veil of darkness, Iblīs (*shayṭān*) uses whisperings (*wasāwis*) to occupy our hearts and minds with negative thoughts and sinful inclinations. He incessantly whispers and influences us with his insinuations until he succeeds in diverting us from the straight path.

Imām Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī ﷺ writes:

The disciple (*murīd*) should make a serious effort in avoiding intentionally bringing sinful thoughts to mind; otherwise these intentional thoughts will eventually drag them back into sin. These thoughts become more intense when the disciple (*murīd*) dwells on them, and they prompt *shayṭānic* whisperings (*wasāwis*). When these whisperings start piling up, they become a means by which the enemy gains influence over the heart. So, the most harmful thing to do for someone who has repented from a sin is to intentionally fantasize and engage in these sinful thoughts, because doing so will ultimately

lead them to fall into the path of destruction again. Every avenue that leads to sin, or reminds one of sin, is a sin.[44]

Mawlānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī ﷺ mentions the cure to whisperings (*wasāwis*): "By Allah, there is no cure to whisperings except ignoring them and not engaging with the thoughts."

He also said, "One should involve oneself in something opposite to these thoughts. Think about something else and occupy your mind with alternative thoughts because the mind cannot focus on two things at once."

Imām Ibn al-Jawzī ﷺ writes:

> Iblīs—may he be cursed—dispatches three hundred, sixty armies of devils to mislead and deviate the believers. In response to this, Allah looks upon their hearts three hundred, sixty times and with each glance of mercy an army is defeated. How can the army of *shayṭān* remain, when the heart is under the Divine glance of al-Raḥmān (The Most-Merciful)?
>
> So beware, O slaves of Allah! Do not give any attention to these deceptive insinuations and whisperings of *shayṭān*. Busy your hearts with the reflection of His signs, humble yourself, and wash away your transgressions with a torrential rain of tears [in repentance]...[45]

44—Qūt al-Qulūb
45—Bustān al-Wāʿiẓīn

THE EXTERNAL SINS

Taken from *Al-Kabā'ir*, compiled by Imām al-Dhahabī.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَن يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ

Surely, Allah does not forgive associating anything with Him, and He forgives whatever is other than that for whomever He wills.[46]

THE LIST OF MAJOR SINS IN ISLAM:

- Associating anything with Allah.
- Murder.
- Practicing black magic.
- Not praying the five daily prayers.
- Not paying *zakāh* despite being financially able.
- Not fasting in Ramaḍān (without valid excuse).
- Not performing Ḥajj despite being able.
- Disrespect to parents.
- Severing ties with relatives.
- Fornication and adultery.

46—Al-Nisā' 4:48

❖ Homosexual acts and sodomy.

❖ Interest (*ribā*).

❖ Wrongfully consuming the property of an orphan.

❖ Falsely attributing something to Allah and His Messenger ﷺ.

❖ Fleeing from the battlefield.

❖ A leader's deceiving his people or being unjust with them.

❖ Haughtiness.

❖ Bearing false witness.

❖ Consuming alcohol or intoxicants.

❖ Gambling.

❖ Wrongfully accusing a woman of being unchaste.

❖ Wrongfully taking from the spoils of war.

❖ Stealing.

❖ Highway robbery.

❖ Taking false oaths.

❖ Oppression.

❖ Illegal gain.

❖ Consuming wealth acquired unlawfully.

❖ Committing suicide.

❖ Frequent lying.

❖ Judging unjustly.

❖ Giving or accepting bribes.

❖ Women imitating men or men imitating women.

❖ Not having protective jealousy of one's womenfolk; being a cuckold.

❖ Marrying a divorced woman solely to make it lawful for her ex-husband to remarry her.

❖ Not protecting or cleaning oneself from droplets of urine.

❖ Showing-off.

❖ Gaining religious knowledge for worldly motives; or to conceal knowledge.

❖ Betrayal of trust.

❖ To remind someone of the favor you showed them.

❖ Denying Allah's decree.

❖ Listening to people's private conversations.

❖ To take part in spreading gossip[47]—confirmed or not.

❖ Cursing.

❖ Breaching contracts.

❖ Believing in fortune-tellers and astrologers.

❖ To violate one's marital duties,[48] or to forsake, hate, or be an evil companion to one's spouse.

❖ Making statues and pictures of animate beings.

❖ Lamenting, wailing, tearing at the clothing, and

47— Gossip is defined as casual or unconstrained conversation or reports about other people, typically involving details that are not confirmed as being true.

48— In the case of the husband: for him to treat her hurtfully, be unkind, neglect what is due to her, or be aloof of her. In the case of the wife: for her to be disobedient, exalt herself against him, defy him, or neglect what is due to him.

doing other things of this sort when an affliction befalls one.

❖ Treating others unjustly.

❖ Overbearing conduct towards the wife, the servant, the weak, and animals.

❖ Disturbing one's neighbor.

❖ Offending and abusing Muslims.

❖ Offending people and having an arrogant attitude towards them.

❖ For men to wear clothing that extends beyond the ankle out of pride.

❖ Men wearing silk and gold.

❖ Slaughtering an animal for anyone or anything other than Allah.

❖ To knowingly ascribe one's paternity to a father other than one's own.

❖ Arguing and disputing violently.

❖ Withholding excess water when there is a dire need.

❖ Giving short weight or measure.

❖ Feeling secure from Allah's punishment.

❖ Offending Allah's righteous servants.

❖ Not praying in congregation but praying alone without an excuse.

❖ Persistently missing Friday prayers without any excuse.

❖ Distributing inheritance contrary to the command of Allah.

❖ Deceiving and plotting evil.

❖ Spying for the enemy of the Muslims.

❖ Cursing or insulting any of the companions of Allah's Messenger ﷺ.

THE WORLDLY HARMS OF SINNING

Taken from *Behishtī Zewar*
by Ḥakīm al-Ummah Mawlānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī ﷺ

When the heart becomes veiled from the blessings and mercies of Allah through these internal and external sins, then the after effects and repercussions in this life and the next will be detrimental.

Ḥakīm al-Ummah ﷺ mentions some of these repurcussions below:

❖ Being deprived of knowledge.

❖ Finding a decrease in one's sustenance (*rizq*).

❖ Discomfort when Allah ﷻ is mentioned.

❖ Feeling uneasy in the presence of good and pious people.

❖ Experiencing difficulty in most matters.

❖ Loss of purity of the heart.

❖ Feeling weakness of heart, and at times weakness of the body.

❖ Being deprived or bereft of doing good deeds.

❖ Decrease of one's lifespan or in the blessings of life.

❖ Losing the capability (*tawfīq*) to repent (*tawbah*).

❖ The gravity of sin diminishing in the heart over time.

❖ Becoming despicable in the sight of Allah.

❖ Affecting others through one's immorality or wrongdoing; thereby being cursed by them.

❖ Deficiency in one's intellect.

❖ Receiving the curse of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

❖ Being deprived of the *duʿās* of the angels.

❖ Facing a shortage of crops.

❖ Losing one's modesty and sense of self-respect.

❖ The greatness of Allah ﷻ leaving the heart.

❖ Being deprived of bounties and blessings.

❖ Being engulfed or inundated by difficulties and calamities.

❖ Allowing *shayṭāns* to be deputed over one.

❖ The heart remaining in turmoil.

❖ Being unable to read the *kalimah* (*Lā ilāha illAllāh*) at the time of death.

❖ Despairing of the mercy of Allah ﷻ; thus, dying without repenting.

THE WORLDLY BENEFITS OF OBEDIENCE

Taken from *Behishtī Zewar*
by Ḥakīm al-Ummah Mawlānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī ﷺ

When the veils of the heart are lifted by opposing the temptations of *shayṭān* and the lower desires (*nafs*), the heart—having been polished like a mirror—reflects the Divine mercies that are perpetually descending. It thus becomes filled with light that then pours forth into one's everyday life.

Ḥakīm al-Ummah ﷺ mentions some examples of these blessings:

- ❖ Having one's sustenance increased.
- ❖ Receiving blessings and bounties of all kinds.
- ❖ Problems and difficulties becoming distant from one.
- ❖ Experiencing ease in the fulfillment of needs.
- ❖ Experiencing a life of contentment.
- ❖ Rains becoming plentiful.
- ❖ All types of calamities being warded off.
- ❖ Experiencing the kindness and help of Allah ﷻ.

- ❖ Angels being commanded to fortify one's heart and keep it strong.
- ❖ Receiving true respect and honor.
- ❖ Having one's status raised.
- ❖ People having love for one in their hearts.
- ❖ The Qurʿān becoming a source of deliverance by its intercession on one's behalf.
- ❖ Any material loss being substituted with better.
- ❖ Experiencing an increase in blessings day by day.
- ❖ Finding an increase in wealth.
- ❖ Experiencing comfort and tranquility of the heart.
- ❖ Transferring these benefits from one generation to the next.
- ❖ Experiencing glad tidings in this very world.
- ❖ Hearing and receiving glad tidings from the angels at the time of death.
- ❖ Increase in one's lifespan or in life's blessings
- ❖ Finding abundance in things which are small in quantity.
- ❖ Being saved from Allah's wrath.

VIRTUES OF TAWBAH & ISTIGHFĀR

We have learned that the greatest obstacles on the path to Allah are sin and disobedience, in all their forms. One becomes distanced and veiled from the Beloved by doing those things that are detested by the Beloved. Hence, it is only logical to abstain from those things which displease Him.

In summary, the cure to sin is:

- Staying away from all the avenues that lead to sin.
- Making an internal struggle and opposing the demands of the lower desires (*nafs*) to sin.
- Keeping the company of pious saints (*awliyā'*) and obtaining their *du'ās*.
- If one happens to fall into the temptation of sin and becomes overwhelmed by the lower desires (*nafs*) and *shayṭān*, then to turn to repentance (*tawbah*) and seeking forgiveness (*istighfār*) from Allah.

Ḥakīm al-Ummah says:

> The easy cure to sin is to immediately seek forgiveness and repent because the inclination to sin is transformed

> [through repentance] into the inclination to do good deeds, as mentioned in the verse:
>
> إِلَّا مَن تَابَ وَءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ عَمَلًا صَٰلِحًا فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ يُبَدِّلُ ٱللَّهُ سَيِّـَٔاتِهِمْ حَسَنَٰتٍ ۗ وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا
>
> *"...Except for those who repent, believe, and do righteous work. For them, Allah will transform their [desire and inclination to commit] evil deeds into [the desire and inclination to perform] good. And Allah is ever Forgiving and Merciful..."*[49]

Hence, any time a sin is committed, do not delay in repenting (*tawbah*) because the heaviness of worship is burdensome upon the lower desires (*nafs*) and *shayṭān*. If every time the sin occurs, one follows it up with sincere repentance in the manner taught by the Prophet ﷺ (i.e., by making a fresh and complete *wuḍū'*, praying two *rakā'ahs nafl*, crying, and imploring Allah for forgiveness), the base self (*nafs*) will not be able to withstand this burden and will eventually abandon its insinuations to commit sin...[50]

49—Al-Furqān 25: 70. The most well known meaning of this verse is that Allah changes the sins on one's record into good deeds. However, Ḥakīm al-Ummah is relating another accepted meaning mentioned by the *mufassirūn*.

50—*Taysīr al-Islāḥ* (A transcribed lecture taken from *Da'wāt-e-'Abdiyyat*)

Repentance removes the veil of darkness from the heart more effectively than any other deed.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

> When someone commits a sin, a black stain appears upon the heart. If he leaves the sin and repents, the heart becomes polished and purified. And if he returns to the sin, then that darkness increases until it completely envelops the entire heart. This is that cover which Allah has mentioned:

كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِم مَّا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

Nay! But on their hearts is a covering [of sins and evil deeds from] what they used to earn.[51,52]

The most effective method of seeking forgiveness and repentance is what has been elucidated by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, as mentioned in a *ḥadīth* narrated by ʿAlī رضي الله عنه:

> Anyone who happens to commit a sin, but then performs proper ablution, stands, and [sincerely] prays two *rakāʿahs*, and seeks Allah's forgiveness, Allah will most surely forgive him.

51—Al-Muṭaffifin 83:14
52—Tirmidhī

Then he recited the verse:

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَاحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ
فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَن يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
وَلَمْ يُصِرُّوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلُوا وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

"...And those who, when they commit an immorality or wrong themselves [by transgression], remember Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins—and who can forgive sins except Allah? And [who] do not persist in what they have done knowingly..."[53,54]

In another *ḥadīth* it is mentioned, "Whoever recites:

أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللهَ الَّذِي لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ

I seek forgiveness from Allah, the One besides Whom there is no God, the Everliving, the All-Sustaining. And I repent to Him.

Then all his sins are forgiven, even if he deliberately fled from the battlefield."[55]

53—Āl ʿImrān 3:135
54— Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah and Ibn Ḥibbān
55— Abū Dāwūd and Tirmidhī

SAYYID AL-ISTIGHFĀR: THE SUPREME FORM OF SEEKING FORGIVENESS

اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ رَبِّي ، لا إِلَه إِلاَّ أَنْتَ خَلَقْتَني وأَنَا عَبْدُكَ ، وأَنَا على عهْدِكَ وَوَعْدِكَ ما اسْتَطَعْتُ ، أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ ما صَنَعْتُ ، أَبُوْءُ لَكَ بِنِعْمَتِكَ عليَّ ، وَأَبُوءُ بِذَنْبي فَاغْفِرْ لي ، فَإِنَّهُ لا يغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبِ إِلاَّ أَنْتَ

"O Allah! You are my Lord! None has the right to be worshipped but You. You created me and I am Your slave, and I am faithful to my covenant and promise to the best of my ability. I seek Your protection from all the evil I have done. I acknowledge before You all the blessings You have bestowed upon me, and I confess to You all my sins. So, I beg You to forgive my sins, for nobody can forgive sins except You."

The Prophet ﷺ said:

> Anyone who recites it during the day—with full conviction—and dies in the same day before the evening, will be from the people of Paradise; and anyone who recites it at night—with full conviction—and dies before the morning, will be from the people of Paradise.[56]

56— Bukhārī

THE MERCY OF ALLAH

Those who find themselves struggling with a sin or trying to remain steadfast upon righteousness, *shayṭān* tries to veil their hearts and deceive them into becoming hopeless of Allah's mercy. *Shayṭān* comes to the sinner, saying things like:

> "You are filthy and unworthy now, what's the point in worshipping Allah while simultaneously committing sin?"
>
> "...You're nothing but a two-faced hypocrite!"
>
> "...All this repentance and worship is pointless..."

The answer to all of these *shayṭānic* deceptions is to remember and reflect upon Allah's infinite mercy. Our *shaykh* would emphatically remind the Ummah to never despair of the mercy of Allah and to never lose sight of the value of the tears of regret.

مـادران را مهـر مـن آموختـم
چـون بود شـمعی که من افروختم

> I am the One Who inspired love in the hearts of mothers,
> This love in their hearts is a candle that I have lit![57]

57—Mathnawī

The love of a mother—who is overflowing with unconditional mercy for her child—is nothing but a bestowal from Allah Himself. It is a manifestation of the infinite mercy of Allah. If a child annoys their mother and the mother expels them from the home, when the child returns home, the mother takes that child into her embrace without any hesitation. What then can be said about the infinite mercy of Allah Himself? That same Allah Who inspired this love into their hearts. No matter how bad, sinful, or lost a person becomes, Allah is more pleased with the repentance of His slave than even a mother who sees her lost child again.

Anas bin Mālik ﷺ narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

> Verily, Allah is more pleased with the repentance of His slave [when they return to their Lord after committing a sin] than a person who loses his camel in a waterless, barren desert, carrying his provisions of food and drink. Having lost all hope [of its return], he lies down in the shade of a tree in utter despair. All of a sudden, he finds his camel standing before him. He takes hold of its reins and out of boundless joy exclaims, 'O Allah, You are my slave and I am Your Lord'. He utters this mistake out of extreme joy.[58]

58—Muslim

Anas ﷺ also narrates:

> I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say, "Allah the Almighty has said, 'O child of Adam, if you continue to invoke Me and ask of Me, I shall continue to forgive your sins, without caring in the least about what you did. O child of Adam, were your sins to reach the clouds in the sky and you then asked forgiveness from Me, I would forgive you. O child of Adam, were you to come to Me with sins nearly as great as the Earth, and then were to come before Me, ascribing no partner to Me, I would come to you with forgiveness the likes of it.'"[59]

By reflecting upon the infinite mercy and benevolence of Allah ﷻ, a person gains the hope they need to continue to tread the path to Allah. Ḥāfiẓ Shīrāzi ﷺ reminds the wayfarer on this journey:

در طریقت هر چه پیشِ سالک آید خیرِ اوست
در صراطِ مستقیم ای دل کسی گمراه نیست

Whatever comes on the path of the sālik is good for them.
O heart, there is no unfortunate one on the straight path.

In other words, the one treading this path (*sālik*) is at times strong and at other times weak; at times zealous for righteous

59—Tirmidhī

deeds and at other times lethargic. At times they may even falter and commit sin; but as long as they get back up and continue the journey, they will eventually reach their sweet destination.

One poet says:

ہم نے طے کی اس طرح سے منزلیں
گر پڑے گر کر اٹھے اٹھ کر چلے

Like this we tread the path to Allah:
We fall, we get up, and we keep on going...

If one makes a mistake or falls prey to the desires of the base self (*nafs*), and happens to commit sin, one should never think that this is the end of the road. The gates of Allah's mercy are always open for the sinner.

"Verily Allah spreads His hand of mercy in the night to forgive the one who sins by day, and spreads His hand of mercy in the day to forgive the one who sins by night, and this will continue until the sun rises in the west (i.e. at the end of time)."[60]

60—Muslim

TAWBAH: WŪḌŪʾ FOR THE HEART

Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Ḥakīm Muḥammad Akhtar ﷺ gives a beautiful parable regarding the reality of sin and repentance (*tawbah*). He says:

> What do you do if you happen to break your *wūḍūʾ*? Do you become despondent and say, 'O well, I have broken my *wūḍūʾ*, what is the point in making *wūḍūʾ* again?' This is undoubtedly a foolish thing to say. Rather, you simply get up and make a fresh *wūḍūʾ*.

Similarly, it is foolish to say, "Well, I have committed a sin... there is no point in repenting (*tawbah*) now." This is exactly what *shayṭān* wants from us—to lose hope and fall into despair. Rather, one should view repentance from sin to be just like making *wūḍūʾ* from impurity. Allah has given us repentance to purify our hearts, just as He has given us *wūḍūʾ* to purify our limbs.

HASTENING TO REPENT

The great scholar ʿIzz al-Dīn bin Abdus-Salām ﵀ says:

> Repentance (*tawbah*) is mandatory immediately. Whoever delays it for a long period of time becomes sinful of delaying repentance...
>
> ...A separate repentance is necessary for delaying it. This principle applies to every act that is necessary to hasten.

Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Ḥakīm Muḥammad Akhtar ﵀ said:

> If you had filth, urine, or feces on your clothes, would you delay in washing it off? Would you leave yourself in that defiled state for a single moment? Or would you immediately purify yourself?
>
> Similarly with spiritual defilement. We should not tolerate an iota of sin for even a moment. Immediately repent from sin and do not delay—for there is no guarantee on life.

CONCLUSION

THE PRESCRIPTION FOR REMOVING HEEDLESSNESS FROM THE HEART

Ḥakīm al-Ummah Thānwī ﵀ offers this prescription for removing the veils of heedlessness from the heart:

> 1—Study sacred texts of the faith (*dīn*) or attend gatherings where such essential knowledge is taught [knowledge is light and light dispels darkness].
>
> 2—Continue to inquire about rulings of the religion (*fiqh*) from pious scholars regarding the matters of your life and heed their advice and admonition.

3—Frequent the company (*ṣuḥbah*) of the pious people. If one cannot do that, one should read their words and anecdotes.

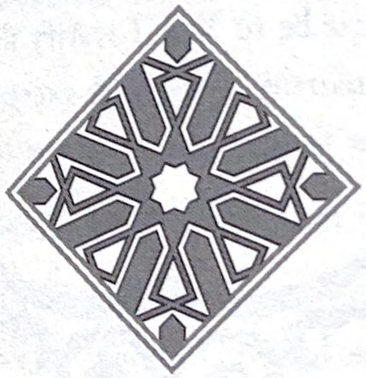
4—Dedicate some time daily for Allah's remembrance (*dhikr*). Include a portion of time for contemplation and self-accountability.

In this session of contemplative self-accountability, address your base self (*nafs*) in this manner:

> "O Nafs! You are undoubtedly going to leave this world one day. Death is coming and you will not take any of these worldly possessions with you to the grave. You will abandon all these worldly things that you are attached to. Your spouse, children, and loved ones will all leave you and you will have to answer to Allah.
>
> If your righteous actions are greater, then you will receive Allah's pleasure and forgiveness. And if your sins are greater then you will have to deal with the punishment of Hell, which cannot be endured.
>
> So, think about your Hereafter and prepare for it because this life is a precious thing. Do not waste it in useless pursuits. After you pass away, you

> will wish, 'If only I had prepared for the life of the Hereafter by doing some righteous deeds, so that I might have received Allah's forgiveness.
>
> At that time, your regret will be of no avail. So, value this life and use it for the benefit of your Hereafter." [END QUOTE][61]

May Allah show us the truth as it truly is and enable us to follow it. And may He show us falsehood and vice as they truly are and enable us to abstain from them. *Āmīn.*



61—*Asbāb al-Ghaflah, from Khutubāt-e-Ḥakīm al-Ummah*

سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ
أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ
أَسْتَغْفِرُكَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْكَ

"O Allah, You are free from every imperfection; praise be to You. I testify that there is none worthy of worship except You; I seek Your forgiveness and turn to You in repentance."

APPENDIX I:

A Letter from One Seeking Advice

A LETTER FROM ONE SEEKING ADVICE

A disciple (*murīd*) complains to his *shaykh* in a letter:

Whenever I do my *dhikr* (daily remembrances), layer after layer of filthy, lustful thoughts keep arising from my subconscious mind. Sometimes they are so strong that I am bewildered as to how to stop them. I am not firmly established in *sulūk* (the path of Allah), nor in *taqwā* (piety). The old habits of lust and evil thoughts still lurk within

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me. Lust is troubling me excessively. The very thought of women excites me and arouses my lustful desires. My mind is so sensitive that I am not able to hear their voice nor [even] think of them. As soon as the mere thought of a woman comes to the mind, my *dhikr* is disturbed, and the peace of the whole day is spoiled. I advise my mind, coax it, frighten it, but it is of no avail. My mind revolts. I do not know how to control this passion. Irritability, selfishness, anger, greed, hatred, and attachment are still lurking within me. However, lust is my main enemy, and a very strong one too. I am completely lost. Please advise me as to how to overcome this.

THE RESPONSE

In your *dhikr* (daily remembrances), when filthy thoughts emerge from the lower self (*nafs*) and come to the surface of the conscious mind with formidable force, do not try to resist them. Instead, continue to repeat "*Lā ilāha illAllāh*"[62] vigorously and audibly, thinking of nothing else. Every time your mind drifts away,

62— *Dhikr* of "*Lā ilāha illAllāh*" is also called "*nafi-ithbāt*". *Nafi* means to negate; hence, we are negating from our hearts all that contradicts the obedience of Allah. *Ithbāt* means to affirm; hence, we are affirming our sole devotion to Allah.

bring it back to your *dhikr*. Continue to do this over and over again. Let your mind follow the sound of "*lā ilāha illAllāh*". *Inshā'Allah*, the mind will eventually let go of the stray thoughts, and center on the *dhikr*.

Secondly, understand that the main cause of unmanageable lustful thoughts is the constant bombardment of sensual images upon the heart. Due to living in a hypersexualized society, we are constantly being exposed to sexually explicit images and sights. To counter this, do not go to mixed gatherings, crowded areas, or places where you will be exposed to lustful sights, except out of necessity. Do not go near social media—it is rampant with shameless and pornographic images.

Our beloved *shaykh*, Mawlānā Ḥakīm Muḥammad Akhtar ﷺ used to say, "Fight the battle of lust at the gateway of the eyes. If you do this, the heart will remain safe and you will not be tormented by lustful desires. But if you do not guard the gateway of the eyes—allowing lustful sights to enter the heart—it becomes very difficult to fight the lust once it has infiltrated your inner being."

Thirdly, make a commitment to yourself in the morning that you will not cast any lustful glances intentionally or conjure up sexual fantasies. Strive with your heart and soul to ensure that you do not see any lustful images, nor think any lustful thoughts, nor engage in any talk or discussion of this nature. Vehemently avoid anything or anyone that will incite and stimulate your

sexual desires. Delete all apps, social media outlets, and other avenues by which you are exposed to sexual images. Consider them to be the destroyers of your connection with Allah and something that darkens your spiritual light. Do this for three days. Then continue on this path for one week, then gradually up to two weeks, and finally strive to complete forty days of chastity (*ʿiffah*) and spiritual purity. If you can complete a full forty-day period of avoiding all pornographic images, deliberate lustful thinking, and fantasizing, a renewed spiritual energy and peace will generate from within. A spiritual enlightenment (*nūrāniyyah*) will develop within you. You will begin to enjoy your *dhikr*, and you will feel an amazing pleasure in your worship and acts of devotion. You will have attained a connection with Allah the Exalted. If in this period, a sudden fleeting thought arises but is immediately dispelled, there is no harm. What should be avoided is intentionally conjuring lustful thoughts.

Furthermore, do not beat yourself up by dwelling too much on your mistakes, defects, or evil qualities. Do not allow *shayṭān* to drag you into despair by constantly reminding you of your sins. Every time he reminds of your sins, trying to make you abandon this path, remind yourself of the ocean of Allah's infinite mercy—such an ocean that dissolves every impurity, sin, and defect when it engulfs a person. Do not allow *shayṭān* to make you say, "I am so filthy. I am dirty. I am not fit to worship Allah. I am not worthy of this path." This is counterproductive and

makes a person go backwards on this path. It gives *shayṭān* the opportunity to bring you down and make you hopeless.

Also do not attempt to aggressively fight lustful thoughts or engage them. When lustful thoughts overwhelm you, think of them to be like the high-tides and low-tides of the ocean. When the feeling of lust comes about, turn your attention elsewhere, busy yourself with good activities, and occupy your mind with healthy thoughts and distractions. You will notice after some time that, like the tide of the ocean, the lust will have receded and returned to its low-tide.

If the feelings of lustful passion overwhelm you, then it is sufficient for you to work on this defect at a separate juncture by reflecting on its remedies while in solitude. Do not try to directly attack these evil qualities in the moment. Otherwise, they will attack you even more. Just focus on developing your positive virtues. Focus on attaining purity. And that is done by doing what we have mentioned above.

Do not worry yourself by constantly thinking: "I have so many defects and weaknesses." The productive method of rectifying these evil traits is to counter them by cultivating luminous (*nurānī*) virtues. Do the opposite of their demands. For example, if the lower desires (*nafs*) demand you to be jealous and backbite someone, oppose this by making *duʿā'* for that person and speaking good of them. If the lower desires (*nafs*) demand you

to be stingy, then spend some amount in charity. If the lower desires (*nafs*) demand you to conjure lustful thoughts, involve yourself in acts and thoughts of purity. Purity in action is manifested in optional (*nafl*) worship, *dhikr*, beneficial work, feeding and serving the poor, visiting the sick, caring for one's parents and being extra dutiful to them.

When performing these pure, spiritual acts, one should intend attaining purity of the heart. Ask Allah, "O my beloved Allah, through the blessing of these righteous acts, purify my heart, subdue my uncontrollable desires, and enlighten my heart with Your light. Verily Your light dispels all darkness and evil."

Idleness is the root cause of many sins and bad habits. Keep yourself busy with mental and spiritual exertion. Physical exercise and hard work is also extremely beneficial to get your mind off stray thoughts. The mind cannot be occupied with two activities at once.

Finally, the greatest means of attaining purity is by asking Allah's help through *duʿāʾ* for purity, chastity, and protection. Along with this, be persistent in audible *dhikr*, the constant development of positive qualities, spending time in reflection (*murāqabah*), and being in the auspicious company (*ṣuḥbah*) of the *shaykh*. None of this can be achieved without using one's willpower and determination (*himmah*).[63] Through this powerful spiritual

63—Refer to Chapter on "Willpower & Determination" (p.41)

regimen, all these negative qualities will die off by themselves with the help of Allah. This is the best method; and only with Allah's enablement (*tawfiq*) can this be achieved.

Some may inquire, "Why not just get married and solve the problem once and for all?" To this we respond, marriage is definitely the greatest cure to lustful inclinations. Undoubtedly, it is a prophetic remedy and will definitely help in guarding the eyes and one's chastity. However, lust as a spiritual disease, once taken root, cannot be remedied so easily even through marriage. This is why we have observed that many young people, despite getting married in order to remedy their lustful desire, cannot curb their passions; because they have failed to address the problem at its source, deep rooted in their heart and inner being. Hence, the need for the above mentioned courses of action.

—The lowly slave of Allah,
Tameem Ahmadi

APPENDIX II:
A SYNOPSIS OF THE KASHF AL-MAḤJŪB

A SYNOPSIS OF THE KASHF AL-MAḤJŪB

In the discussion regarding attaining the rays of light and removing the veils of darkness, we cannot overlook one of the earliest treatises on this subject, namely the *Kashf al-Maḥjūb* of Shaykh ʿAlī b. ʿUthmān al-Hujwayrī ﵀ (d. 465). Shaykh al-Hujwayrī essentially argues that each of the integral practices of Islam result in the removal of the veils of darkness from our hearts. As we implement these fundamental teachings of Islam

in our lives—inwardly in faith and outwardly in practice—we are removing the veils of darkness to witness the manifestations of Allah's proximity. His exposition is essentially a response to those ignorant and deviant *ṣūfī*s who claim to reach Allah without practicing the obligatory tenets of faith. They believe that they can reach Allah through whatever belief system they want and by whatever practice they desire; whereas the only path to unveiling the Veiled is through bringing the Divine laws of Islam into our lives in their totality—inwardly and outwardly.

Shaykh al-Hujwayrī divides the unveiling of darkness from the heart into nine categories. The first three of those unveilings relate to the rectification of belief in Allah, and the rest of them relate to ritual acts of worship and external deeds of the limbs. This outline of the path to Allah is an essential road map for us to follow—to remove the veils of heedlessness from the heart.

For the benefit of the reader we present an outline of Shaykh al-Hujwayrī's magnum opus:

Shaykh al-Hujwayrī ﵀ writes:

> Now I will unveil the portals of practice and the theory of the true People of Allah (the rightly guided *ṣūfī*s), furnishing my explanation with evident proofs, in order that you may more easily comprehend my meaning, and that any skeptic who may exercise their insight may be

led back to the right way, and that I may thereby gain a blessing and Divine reward.

1–THE UNCOVERING OF THE FIRST VEIL: CONCERNING THE RECOGNITION OF ALLAH (MA'RIFAT ALLAH).

The Shaykh says:

> The real essence of the recognition of Allah is to realize that to Allah alone belongs the kingdom. When a man knows that all things are in the absolute control of Allah, what further business has he with mankind, that he should be veiled from Allah by them or by himself? All such veils are the result of ignorance. As soon as ignorance is annihilated, they vanish, and this life is made equal in rank to the life of the Hereafter.

2– THE UNCOVERING OF THE SECOND VEIL: CONCERNING THE ONENESS OF ALLAH (TAWḤĪD).

Regarding the true affirmation of Allah's oneness, the Shaykh says, "The minimal requirement of it is to declare that there is no deity worthy of worship but Allah and that He is without

any sharer in His essence and attributes; without any substitute; without any partner in His actions, and inasmuch as true believers in His oneness (*muwaḥḥidūn*) have acknowledged that He is such, their knowledge of unity is called *tawḥīd*.

As for the highest level, it is to have perfect resignation to Allah in such a manner that he witnesses the manifestation of Allah's Divine will in all things."

3– UNCOVERING OF THE THIRD VEIL: CONCERNING FAITH

Regarding *īmān* the Shaykh says:

> ...in reality, without any difference of opinion among Muslims, faith is believing (with the heart) and testifying (with the tongue) and the acceptance and (performance) of good works...
>
> At the highest level, faith is "the immersion of all human capabilities in searching for Allah. This must be unanimously acknowledged by all believers. The power of true faith and recognition of Allah subdues the attributes of doubt, and where faith exists, doubt and disbelief is banished, for, as it is said: 'A lamp is of no use when

the dawn rises.' And once the dawn of true faith and recognition of Allah rises in the heart, then the veils of darkness are dispelled.

4-THE UNCOVERING OF THE FOURTH VEIL: CONCERNING PURIFICATION

Regarding purification, the Shaykh says:

> After faith, the first thing incumbent on a believer is purification (*ṭahārah*) and the performance of prayer, i.e., to cleanse the body from filth and impurity, ablution—to wash the three limbs, and to wipe the head with water as the law prescribes, or to use sand (*tayammum*) in the absence of water or in severe illness...
>
> Purification is of two kinds: outward and inward. Thus, prayer requires the purification of the body, and the recognition of Allah requires the purification of the heart...
>
> Therefore, outward and inward purification must go together; e.g., when a man washes his hands he must wash his heart clean of worldliness, and when he puts water in his mouth he must purify his mouth from the mention of other than Allah, and when he washes his face he must turn away from all attachments and turn wholly towards

> Allah, and when he wipes his head he must resign his affairs to Allah alone, and when he washes his feet he must not form the intention of taking his stand on anything except according to the command of Allah. If he does this, he will be doubly purified.
>
> In all religious injunctions, the external is to be combined with the internal, e.g., in faith, the profession of the tongue is coupled with the belief in the heart.
>
> The method of internal purification is to engage in *tafakkur* and *tadabbur* (reflection and meditation) on the evil of this world—to perceive that it is futile and fleeting and to make the heart empty of it. This result can be attained only by much striving (*mujāhadāt*) against the lower desires and the most important act of striving is to assiduously observe the external rules of discipline (*ādāb-e-zāhir*) in all circumstances.

5-THE UNCOVERING OF THE FIFTH VEIL: CONCERNING PRAYER (AL-ṢALĀH).

Regarding *ṣalāh* the Shaykh writes:

> Prayer literally means remembrance (of Allah) and submissiveness (*dhikr wa inqiyād*), but in the terminology

of the jurists, the term is specially applied to the five daily prayers.

[The spiritual and optimum prayer] requires certain preliminary conditions, namely: (1) purification outwardly from filth and inwardly from forbidden desire; (2) that one's outward garment should be clean and one's inner garment undefiled by anything unlawful; (3) that the place where one purifies one's self should be outwardly free from contamination and inwardly free from corruptness and sin; (4) turning towards the *qiblah*, the outward *qiblah* being the Kaʿbah and the inward *qiblah* being the Throne of Allah, by which is meant the mystery of Divine contemplation; (5) standing outwardly in the state of power (*qudrat*) and inwardly in the garden of proximity to Allah (*qurbat*); (6) sincere intention to approach unto Allah; (7) saying "*Allahu-Akbar*" in a state of awe and annihilation, and standing in the abode of union, and reciting the Qur'ān distinctly and reverently, and bowing the head with humility, and prostrating one's self with abasement, and making the profession of faith with concentration, and saying the final *salām* with the annihilation of one's attributes.

Prayer is a term in which novices find the whole way to Allah, from beginning to end, and in which their stations (*maqāmat*) are revealed.

6-THE UNCOVERING OF THE SIXTH VEIL: CONCERNING ALMS (AL-ṢADAQAH).

Giving charity and fulfilling the annual *zakāh* is one of the obligations of the faith. [The technical rules and regulations are mentioned in the books of the jurists.]

Alms is actually expressing gratitude for a benefit received—the thanks being similar in kind to the benefit. Thus health is a great blessing, for which every limb owes alms. Therefore, healthy persons ought to occupy all their limbs with devotion and withhold them from unlawful pleasures and pastimes so that the alms due for the blessing of health may be fully paid.

Moreover, there is an alms for every spiritual blessing, namely outward and inward acknowledgment of that blessing in proportion to its worth. Thus, when a man knows that the blessings bestowed upon him by Allah are infinite, he should give infinite thanks by way of alms.

7-THE UNCOVERING OF THE SEVENTH VEIL: ON FASTING (AL-ṢAWM)

In reality, fasting is abstinence, which is the essence of the Path to Allah. Junayd said: "Fasting is half of the Way."

The least degree of fasting is hunger, which is Allah's food on earth and is universally commended in the eye of the law and of reason. One month's continual fasting is incumbent on every responsible Muslim who has reached maturity. The obligatory fast begins with the appearance of the moon of Ramaḍān and continues until the appearance of the moon of Shawwāl, and for every day a sincere intention and firm obligation are necessary.

Abstinence involves many obligations, e.g., keeping the belly without food and drink, guarding the eye from lustful glances, the ear from listening to evil speech about anyone in his absence, and the tongue from vain or foul words, and the body from hankering after material things and disobedience to Allah. One who acts in this manner is truly keeping his fast.

To abstain only from food and drink is child's play. One must abstain from idle pleasures and unlawful acts, not just from eating lawful food. I marvel at those who say that they are keeping a voluntary fast and yet fail to perform an obligatory duty. Not committing sin is obligatory, whereas continual fasting is an optional *sunnah* (which may be observed or not). When a man is Divinely protected from sin then all his circumstances are a fast.

8- THE UNCOVERING OF THE EIGHTH VEIL: CONCERNING THE ḤAJJ

The pilgrimage (*ḥajj*) is binding on every Muslim of sound mind who is able to perform it and has reached maturity. It consists of putting on the pilgrim's garb at the proper place, in standing on ʿArafāt, in circumambulating the Kaʿbah, and in running between Ṣafā and Marwa. One must not enter the sacred territory without being clad as a pilgrim (*bil-iḥrām*). Whoever seeks the bodily station [external pilgrimage] must renounce all lusts and pleasures and put on the *iḥrām* pilgrim's garb and clothe himself in a shroud (*kafan*) and refrain from hunting lawful game, and keep all his senses under strict control, and be present at ʿArafāt and go thence to Muzdalifah and Mashʿar al-Ḥarām, and pick up stones and circumambulate the Kaʿbah and visit Mina and stay there for three days and throw stones in the prescribed manner and cut his hair and perform the sacrifice and put on his ordinary clothes.

But whoever seeks the spiritual station must renounce all worldly attachments and bid farewell to pleasures and take no thought of other than Allah (for in the state of spiritual *iḥrām*, his looking towards the physical world is forbidden); then he must stand on the ʿArafāt of Allah's recognition (*maʿrifat*) and from there set out for the Muzdalifah of Divine-company (*ulfat*) and from

there send his heart to circumambulate the Kaʿbah of Divine purification (*tanzīh*), and throw the stones of passion and corrupt thoughts in the Mina of faith, and offer his lower soul on the altar of sacrifice and arrive at the station of friendship (*khullah*).

To enter the physical station is to be secure from enemies and their swords, but to enter the spiritual station is to be secure from separation (from Allah) and its consequences.

Muḥammad b. al-Faḍl ﷺ says:

> I wonder at those who seek His House in this world: why do they not seek contemplation of Him in their hearts? The House they may sometimes attain and sometimes miss, but contemplation they might enjoy always. If they are bound to visit a stone, which is looked at only once a year, surely, they are more bound to visit the Kaʿbah of the heart, where He may be seen three hundred and sixty times in a day and night.

The true lover's every step is a symbol of the journey to Makkah, and when he reaches the sanctuary, he wins a robe of honor for every step.

9–THE UNCOVERING OF THE NINTH VEIL: CONCERNING COMPANIONSHIP, TOGETHER WITH ITS RULES AND PRINCIPLES.

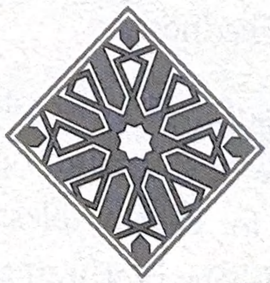
A person who neglects the rules and decorum of good conduct cannot possibly be a saint, for good manners are characteristic of those whom Allah loves. When Allah vouchsafes a miracle to anyone, it is proof that He causes him to fulfill the duties of religion. This is opposed to the view of some heretics, who assert that when a man is overpowered by love he is no longer subject to obedience.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "One is on the religion of his friend; take heed, therefore, with whom you form a friendship." If he associates with the good, their company will make him good, although he is bad; and if he associates with the wicked, he will be wicked, although he may be good because he will be consenting to their wickedness.

It is related that a man said, while he was circumambulating the Kaʿbah, "O Allah, make my brethren good!" On being asked why he did not implore for another blessing for himself in such a place, he replied: " If I have brethren to whom I shall return; if they are good, I shall become good with them, and if they are evil, I will become evil with them."

The principle of the ṣūfīs in companionship is that they should treat everyone according to their stature. Thus, they treat old men with respect, like fathers; those of their own sort with agreeable familiarity, like brothers; and young men with affection, like sons. They renounce hate, envy, and malice, and do not withhold sincere admonition from anyone. In companionship, it is not permissible to speak evil of the absent, or to behave dishonestly, or to deny one another on account of any word or deed, because a companionship that is begun for Allah's sake should not be cut short by human words or acts.

I enjoin the readers of this book to hold it in due regard and to pray that the author may believe to the end and be vouchsafed the vision of Allah (in Paradise)."



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